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**“Cross-over” Comedy in Seventeenth-Century England:**

**from *Michaelmas Term* to *The Roundheads***

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**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the award of  
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## Abstract

This thesis discusses the significance of those comedies written and performed in the years immediately prior to and during the English Civil War, which were (re)written and (re)performed at the Restoration of the English monarchy in the 1660s. The “cross-over” comedies have been dismissed as leftovers from the last days of the playhouses before their closure in 1642, their revival in the Restoration seen as dictated by the scarcity of available new texts. This thesis argues instead that these comedies were carefully selected and revised in order to appeal to Charles II and new Restoration audiences.

The genesis of “cross-over” comedy is initially analysed in a general discussion of examples by authors such as John Fletcher, Thomas Middleton, and Richard Brome. Abraham Cowley’s *Cutter of Coleman Street* is closely compared with his earlier version *The Guardian*, identifying revisions with resonance for the Restoration. The huge influence of Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Davenant on the development of English comedy is reflected in analyses of Killigrew’s self-reflexivity in *The Parson’s Wedding*, and of Davenant’s revisions to William Shakespeare’s plays. Davenant’s depiction of Wit in his “cross-over” comedy *The Wits* is compared with John Fletcher’s “cross-over” comedy *Wit Without Money*. Reference is made to comedies by Sir Robert Howard and John Wilson which did not themselves “cross over” but which nevertheless comment on “cross-over” themes, particularly those of inheritance. The thesis concludes with a discussion of John Tatham’s topical satire, *The Rump*, which “crosses over” as Aphra Behn’s adaptation *The Roundheads*.

The “cross-over” comedies had a significant impact on the development of English comedy in the Restoration and even into the early eighteenth century.

Thomas Jordan’s *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon*, licensed for first performance in 1641, printed in 1657, re-performed in the years surrounding the Restoration, and subsequently re-printed in 1663, is shown to influence William Wycherley, Thomas Shadwell, and John Gay. Although the “cross-over” comedies flourished only briefly, then, their importance as a cultural and dramatic phenomenon has been underestimated.

## **Acknowledgements**

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Joanna Cooksey, Subject Librarian in Oxford Brookes University Library, for her advice in the final writing-up stages. Lastly, I am grateful to Professor Francesco Billari and the staff of the Sociology Department, University of Oxford, where I am currently employed, for their support and encouragement.

Undertaking a part-time PhD has been even more challenging than I expected it to be, and I owe a huge debt to three people above all others. My Director of Studies, Professor Tom Betteridge, has been firm, critical, and encouraging throughout. My immediate supervisor, Dr Katherine Craik, has been rigorous and challenging, asking searching questions and pushing the boundaries of my thinking; her insight and input has been invaluable. Finally, my late mother, Pat Bancroft, the last Librarian at Lichfield Cathedral (with its strong Civil War history and connections with Charles II), took a great interest in reading and discussing my work during its various stages. It is my intense regret that her sudden death four months ago meant that she did not see my thesis to its completion.

## Declaration

Two parts of this thesis have been accepted for publication, pre-submission.

In Chapter Three, part of the material on Thomas Killigrew's *The Parson's Wedding* is to be included under the title: 'Tradition and Innovation in *The Parson's Wedding*' in a collection of essays edited by Dr Philip Major, working title *Thomas Killigrew and the English Stage: New Perspectives*, to be published by Ashgate Press in 2013.

The early part of the discussion in Chapter Four on Thomas Jordan's *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon*, concerning the dating of the comedy in Sir Henry Herbert's records, is to be published in the March 2013 edition of *Notes and Queries* under the title "A lost play found: Thomas Jordan's *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon*".

### **Note on texts**

Wherever possible, I have consulted the first printed editions of early modern plays in the British Library and the Bodleian Library, or facsimiles in *Early English Books Online (EEBO)* <http://eebo.chadwyck.com>. For ease of reference and clarity, quotations are however supplied from modern editions when these are available. For the sake of clarity, speech-prefixes are expanded, standardised and italicised, and stage directions are consistently italicised. Line numbers are supplied for quotations; when these are not clearly indicated, I have given page numbers.

### **Note on dates**

The date of first publication of early modern playtexts is rarely the same as the date of their first performance or re-staging after the “cross-over”. When referring to plays, I have supplied the date of first publication and have also given the date of first performance where relevant.

### **Note on the spelling of Davenant’s name**

Throughout the thesis I have retained the original spelling of Sir William Davenant’s surname, although noting that he later adopted the pseudo-French spelling of D’Avenant, which some editors have followed.



## Frequently cited works

Some critical works by modern scholars have been frequently cited. These are listed below:

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- Cust, Richard and Ann Hughes, eds, *The English Civil War* (London: Arnold, 1997)
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- *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603 – 1660*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010)
- *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992)
- *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2000)
- Spencer, Christopher, ed., *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965)
- Stubbs, John, *Reprobates: The Cavaliers of the English Civil War* (London: Viking, Penguin Books Ltd, 2011)
- Whitaker, Katie, *Mad Madge: Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, Royalist, Writer and Romantic* (USA: Basic Books, 2002, repr. London, Chatto & Windus, 2003)
- Whitney, Charles, *Early Responses to Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)
- Wikander, Matthew H., *Princes to Act: Royal Audience and Royal Performance, 1578 – 1792* (Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1993)
- Wiseman, Susan, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)
- Zwicker, Steven N., *Lines of Authority: Politics and English Literary Culture 1649-1689* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993)

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## Introduction: Defining “cross-over” comedy

At an unspecified date between 1641 and 1642, Richard Brome’s comedy *A Joviall Crew, or, The Merry Beggars* was licensed and performed at the Cock-pit playhouse in Drury Lane. Its author later claimed that it ‘had the luck to tumble last of all in the Epidemicall ruine of the Scene’.<sup>1</sup> Traditionally, scholars have dated Brome’s comedy to the spring of 1641, thereby assuming that the playhouses entered a sixteen-month period of decline before they were officially closed in 1642, due to the outbreak of civil war between King and parliament, and leading to what the actor and playwright Thomas Jordan called ‘a perpetuall, at least a very long temporary silence’.<sup>2</sup> Matthew Steggle has argued convincingly, however, that Brome’s use of the civic - rather than the calendar - year moves the possible date of performance to March 1642, just a few months before the ‘World turn’d upside down’.<sup>3</sup> Assuming that Steggle is correct, Brome’s comedy was the last new work to be performed before the official closure of the playhouses on 2 September 1642 and it was one of the first comedies to be revived in 1661, in one of the two new playhouses endorsed by Charles II on his Restoration to the English throne. When the two courtiers Sir William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew revived theatrical performances under the aegis of the restored monarch, they returned to plays by Brome and his contemporaries which had first been performed during the reign of Charles I. What changes – if any - were made to

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Brome, *A Jovial Crew*, in *A Jovial Crew: Richard Brome Online*, eds. Eleanor Lowe, Helen Ostovich and Richard Cave (2010) <<http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/brome/frame.html>> [accessed 27 July 2012], *Epistle Dedicatory*, A2v.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Jordan, *The Actors Remonstrance* (1643), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew Steggle, ‘Redating *A Jovial Crew*’, *Review of English Studies*, New Series, 53.211 (2002) 365 – 72.

these plays of the 1630s and early 1640s to enable their re-staging in the 1660s? How might these comedies have been received by pre - and post - war audiences, and what can we learn about their changing tastes and cultural responses? In short, how did Brome's comedies, and those by other authors such as Sir William Davenant, John Fletcher, Thomas Jordan and Thomas Killigrew make the "cross-over" from the 1630s to the 1660s, and what implications did this "cross-over" have for the development of English Restoration comedy?

My definition of "cross-over" is, at its simplest, a movement from one state of being to another, the process of crossing from one state or position to another, an exchange and / or overlap.<sup>4</sup> This process can be deliberately self-imposed or caused by external developments. In my application of this definition, the two states of being are the monarchies of Charles I and Charles II, ostensibly starting from the same position of kingship, while operating in strikingly different ways. The 'bridge' between these two states, the agent of "cross-over", is the interregnum of 'King Oliver' Cromwell.<sup>5</sup> "Cross-over" is a process of change, but can also involve shared points of similarity or overlap. In this sense, from a theatrical point of view, it resembles the process of "revival", but has broader

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<sup>4</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* offers 13 definitions; my definition is broadly drawn from the 1558 and 1675 definitions of crossing over by flying (1558), or crossing over as in fording a river (1675). <<http://www.oed.com>> [accessed 24 July 2007].

<sup>5</sup> Although Cromwell did consider the title of "king", even contemporary satirists such as John Tatham acknowledged that he only openly flirted with the title of "Highness": in *The Rump, or the Mirrour of the Late Times* (1660), the committee meeting after Cromwell's death orders all references to the dead man as "Highness" to be struck out of the official records (3.1.p.32). Nevertheless the sobriquet continued to be applied, as a shorthand reminder of Cromwell's perceived *hubris* in assuming many of the trappings and formality associated with kingship. Oliver Ford Davis's play *King Cromwell* (2005) debates how close Cromwell came to accepting the crown, as he attempted to divine whether it was God's will or merely that of his political advisors.

implications. A “revival” is a restaging and replication of a production which has previously been given a public performance, and the essential elements of the performance need to be the same. A “cross-over” play may however be restaged and recreated, finding new resonance and meaning through a new production.

I consider various forms of “cross-over” implicit in the Restoration act of restaging and reperforming plays originally staged in the late 1630s and early 1640s. There are several levels on which the “cross-over” can be explored. These include, for example, king to king; playhouse to playhouse; actor to actor; author to author. Perhaps most importantly, the plays were received by two different audiences before and after the Civil War and Republic. Some texts were altered to reflect the changed times, many more were left unmodified. By focusing upon the plays which were performed before the closure of the theatres and revived in the early 1660s, it is possible to gain a closer understanding of the “cross-over” process in the theatre in the mid seventeenth century. It is also indicative of the “cross-over” from monarchy to republic and from republic to monarchy again.

Although ostensibly the monarchy was restored in 1660, it was not the same monarchy as that which came to a violent end in 1649. Key aspects of Restoration society were very different from the Caroline society before the Civil War, and this changed the interpretation of the king and the concept of kingship. As Nancy Klein Maguire has commented, ‘....both theatre and monarchy were beginning anew in 1660 and followed a parallel process in their post-Restoration rehabilitation... they seesawed toward a new culture, vacillating between tradition

and innovation.’<sup>6</sup> There has been a tendency for scholars to dismiss the new drama performed in the early years of the Restoration as insignificant. Dale Randall has concluded, for example, that the plays written in the 1640s and 1650s are sometimes ‘only cream-bowl deep’.<sup>7</sup> Alfred Harbage, too, has queried whether the drama produced by aristocratic authors during the Caroline and commonwealth periods had any significance in the development of Restoration comedy, seeing instead ‘much of the ground-plan of the Restoration comedy of manners’ as being set out by Brome and his contemporaries, and echoed by the sharper satirical style of the newsbooks and pamphlets.<sup>8</sup> My study, however, considers not only the way in which the old Caroline texts were reperformed to offer new meanings for the post-war Restoration audience, but also how a mixture of restaging and rewriting significantly influenced the development of comic writing in the 1640s and 1650s, and prefigured the “Restoration comedy” of the 1660s and 1670s.

I concentrate on comedies by male authors. This is in no way intended to overlook the significant number of women writing plays for private reading and public performance – for example Katharine Phillips, Margaret Cavendish and

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<sup>6</sup> Nancy Klein Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration: English Tragicomedy 1660 - 1671*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.1. Future references to this source will be given as the author’s name followed by the page reference.

<sup>7</sup> Dale B.J. Randall, *Winter Fruit: English Drama 1640 – 1660* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), p.379. Future references to this source will be given as the author’s name followed by the page reference.

<sup>8</sup> Alfred Harbage, *Cavalier Drama* (New York and London: Modern Languages Association of America and Oxford University Press, 1936), p.74. Future references to this source will be given as the author’s name followed by the page reference.

Aphra Behn.<sup>9</sup> However, because no comedy by a woman to my knowledge was performed in the London playhouses before the Civil War, none of their plays fall into my “cross-over” category for the purposes of this thesis. I do, however, discuss Behn’s *The Roundheads* (1682) as an example of a post-Restoration “cross-over” comedy, in this instance crossing over generations under the same monarch, from the beginning of Charles II’s reign to its end. The effect of a “cross-over” play can be negative; for example, Thomas Middleton’s *Michaelmas Term* (1607), which I discuss in Chapter One, was reprinted in 1630 at a time when its subject matter could be seen as a criticism of Charles I and his landed society. In the case of *The Roundheads*, as I show in Chapter Four, Behn produces a piece of overtly pro-monarchical propaganda, reworking a Restoration text to make it more relevant to the 1680s audiences.

While re-interpreting familiar texts within the context of my theory of “cross-over”, I also look at less well-known works, and show how key authors during the period made particular choices in developing their writing. Authors were not only influenced by, and responsive to, the times in which they were writing, but were also making informed choices about their style and content which had a clear effect on the future direction of Restoration comedy. As Aparna Dhadwaker has commented, ‘Playwrights after 1660 had to contend with an

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<sup>9</sup> As discussed by scholars such as Jacqueline Pearson in *The Prostituted Muse: Images of Women and Women Dramatists 1642 – 1737*, (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988); in *Women, Writing, History 1640- 1740*, eds. Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (London: Batsford, 1992); *Women and Dramatic Production 1550 – 1700*, eds. Alison Findley, Stephanie Hodgson-Wright and Gweno Williams (Harlow: Longman Pearson and Associated Companies: 2000), and *Three Seventeenth-Century plays on Women and Performance*, eds. Hero Chalmers, Julie Sanders and Sophie Tomlinson (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006).



indigenous dramatic tradition that was at once quasi-canonical and culturally and linguistically distant: to position themselves successfully, they were compelled to appropriate, modify, or reject the available models.’<sup>10</sup> My study asks why some plays were reprinted (sometimes altered, sometimes left in the original printed form) at a certain time, and how contemporary audiences might have responded to them. Initially they might form part of a supportive manifesto for the new King, but, over time, might some be re-viewed as a critique of the restored monarchy?

My study of the “cross-over” comedies is important in defining and establishing the sense of literary inheritance which developed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and which became the foundation of Augustan literature. In the early and mid-seventeenth century, authors who cared about defining their past, such as Ben Jonson and Sir William Davenant, were using classical models for inspiration. At the end of the seventeenth century, John Dryden’s points of reference were Shakespeare, Jonson and Davenant, men only a generation or two away from the poet himself. This creation of a tangible literary inheritance forms part of the attempt in the post-war years to claim an ancestry which goes back generations, rather than centuries. It is fuelled by a desire to find stability out of instability, and to construct a new and not always accurate history, in order to establish a solid present with an accessible past and shapeable future. The “cross-over” comedies function as part of this construction, looking back at the pre-Civil War years in a more positive light than did the tragicomedies about

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<sup>10</sup> Aparna Dharwadker, ‘Authorship, Metatheatre, and Antitheatre in the Restoration’, *Theatre Research International* 27.2 (2002) 125-135 (p.126).

regicide, tyranny, loss and reparation.<sup>11</sup> They form an essential part of reinstating the line between Charles I and Charles II, which was broken so dramatically by the events of the English Civil War. They also give an indication of the way in which English comedy might have developed, as well as dictating the way in which it did. For this reason, they need to be positioned as a highly significant part of seventeenth-century English literature.

It has been necessary for me to be a little selective in my final choice of “cross-over” texts to include in my discussion, and I have concentrated on the comedies which were written by authors nearest the Civil War. This is not only to reflect the sense of how English dramatic writing continued to develop despite the events of the war and the subsequent Interregnum, but also to focus on key authors of the time who have been overshadowed by more well-known writers such as Ben Jonson and James Shirley. The “cross-over” texts which I have consulted tend to be very little changed in subsequent reprintings. Darlene Johnson Gravett has commented in her edition of Abraham Cowley’s *Cutter of Coleman Street* (1663) that ‘collation of the various editions [1658 and 1663] reveals that the tendency was for a later printer or editor simply to follow an earlier one.’<sup>12</sup> This agrees with my experience of consulting play texts published before and after the Interregnum. The date of publication rarely coincides exactly with the recorded date of the original public performance, however, which is often

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<sup>11</sup> Alongside the comedies were revivals of tragedies and tragicomedies such as William Shakespeare’s *Othello* (1622), Philip Massinger’s *The Bondman* (1624), Massinger and John Fletcher’s *The Elder Brother* (1625), Fletcher’s *The Loyal Subject* (1647), and *The Mad Lover* (1647), and James Shirley’s *The Traitor* (1635).

<sup>12</sup> Darlene Johnson Gravett, *Abraham Cowley’s Cutter of Coleman Street*, (New York: Garland Press, 1987), p. 5.

some years in advance. However some authors might revise their texts specifically from a reading version to one intended for performance; Thomas Killigrew noted that he made significant cuts to his text of *The Parson's Wedding* (1641) before it was performed in 1663, and in Chapter Two I also analyse the effect of the textual revisions made by Cowley to his comedy *The Guardian* (1650), with its reworking as *Cutter of Coleman Street*. When there are significant alterations, these are sometimes made in response to the reception of performances before an audience; so Davenant's *The Wits*, first performed in 1636, and then restaged in 1661, was rewritten in 1672 to amplify the comic character of Constable Snore, who had been played on the Restoration stage by the popular comedian James Nokes. However, as I show in my analysis of Davenant's *The Law Against Lovers* (1662) in Chapter Three, even printed texts by respected authors (in this case Shakespeare), might appear to their adaptor/reviser to require 'improvement', however slight, before their revival and re-performance on the stage.

In my thesis I am inspired by the work of Susan Wiseman. Her influential book *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War* (1998) looks at the theatrical and dramatic activities which continued during the period of the official 'closure' of the theatres. Wiseman traces the ways in which short playlets and dramatic pamphlets replaced full-length dramas on the London stage, considers the changing circumstances of their performance in front of Protectorate audiences rather than pre-war Royalists (many of them now in exile, either in the country, or abroad), and analyses the changing representation of the courtly masque, now included in the Lord Mayor's shows written by John Tatham and Thomas Jordan, and in Sir William Davenant's operas. She describes the way in which heroic

drama was adapted for the Protectorate stage and onwards into the Restoration period, and continues the ground-breaking work of Nancy Klein Maguire in situating the tragicomedy centrally on the Restoration stage. Wiseman concludes that ‘what happened in the post-Restoration theatre was shaped not solely by the dusted-off codes of Caroline theatre, but also by the theatrical legacy of Interregnum drama.’<sup>13</sup>

Although this present study is much influenced by Wiseman’s research, I am also building on Alfred Harbage’s important book *Cavalier Drama* (1936), where he stated his intention ‘to discuss the trends in English drama during the Caroline and Commonwealth periods, and the first few years of the Restoration, with a view to illustrating the continuity of an English literary tradition.’ (p.1) I broadly agree with Harbage’s opinion, but his book does not seek to find a reason for the development of particular ‘trends in English drama’. My thesis, by testing the mechanisms of “cross-over”, explains why certain circumstances prevailed whereas others did not.

Finally, I am referencing Wendy Griswold’s book on *Renaissance Revivals: City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in the London Theatre, 1576 – 1980* (1986). Griswold has discussed how genre is created, shared and changed over time by the community of dramatic producers and consumers, and this is an approach which my thesis also takes. Her study of city comedies and revenge

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<sup>13</sup> Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 217. The key discussions described above occur in Chapter 5, “Royal or reformed? The politics of court entertainment in translation and performance”, Chapter 6, “National identity, topic and genre in Davenant’s Protectorate opera” and Chapter 7, “Genre, politics and place” the social body in the dramatic career of John Tatham.” Future references to this source will be given as the author’s name followed by the page reference.

tragedies clearly differs in its scope; she concentrates on how Jacobean comedies were created in a particular time, and later revived on the Restoration stage, whereas I look at why specific comedies were chosen for revival and re-performance in the Restoration, and what implications this had for the development of seventeenth-century English comedy. Griswold's book is particularly interesting in its summary of the numbers of old and new comedies staged in the early Restoration period, and in her sociological analysis of Henrietta Maria's influence on the Caroline court and stage, and the theatres and managers operating in the later seventeenth century, but she does not look at the cultural "cross-over" of monarchs, playhouse performance and dramatic writing, and this is where my thesis differs significantly from her work.

### **The time of "cross-over": 1642 - 1660**

During the time of the official closure in 1642 of the London playhouses, until their official reopening in 1660, the theatre, like the monarchy, never truly went away. Actors continued to perform illegally in the streets and empty playhouses. Susan Wiseman has commented that this initially covert practice grew into an act of defiance against the Puritans as the civil war and its aftermath developed: 'as soon as each order for closure expired, playing began again.' (Wiseman, p. 5) Janet Clare has noted that 'not all the plays were licensed, but the fact that a number were suggests some acceptance of the act of play writing in the cultural life of the Commonwealth.'<sup>14</sup> However, for Dale Randall, this acceptance was

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<sup>14</sup> Janet Clare, *Drama of the English Republic 1649-60* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 28. Future references to this source will be given as the author's name followed by the page reference.

more a kind of resignation: ‘the English stage was indeed ‘*condemn’d to a long Winter*’... it is true also that many readers of the day realised that written drama constituted a kind of lifeline.’ (Randall, p. 248) Participation in a play, as author, reader, illicit performer, or as audience, was an ingrained part of pre-war society; by continuing the practice, it was possible to believe that the present situation was a temporary one.

Old and newly written plays continued to be read in private houses; they were also acted privately in the provinces and abroad. Leslie Hotson has described how, after the dismantling of the London playhouses in March 1649, those actors who had not already fled to France and to the Hague continued to act in private houses, particularly the Earl of Holland’s in Kensington, whilst amateur performances were also given at private houses in the country.<sup>15</sup> Martin Butler has referred to Sir Edward Dering’s production of *The Spanish Curate*, and the *Masque at Brethby* performed by members of the Stanhope family in 1640.<sup>16</sup>

Although the playhouses were officially closed and theatrical writing was apparently suppressed, a consistent defiance of governmental edicts posed a continued challenge to parliament’s attempts to contain the stage. The sustained argument on the Royalists’ part was that the Puritans’ performances in the pulpit were staged plays, and both sides made full use of the dramatic potential of

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<sup>15</sup> Leslie Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage* (Harvard and Cambridge: Harvard University Press and Cambridge University Press, 1928), pp. 23 – 24. Hotson quotes from James Wright’s *Historia Histrionica* (1699). Future references to this source will be given as the author’s name followed by the page reference.

<sup>16</sup> Martin Butler, *Theatre and Crisis 1632 – 1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 128. Future references to this source will be given as the author’s name followed by the page reference.

newsletters and pamphlets, both in print and public recitals. Lois Potter has claimed that ‘on each occasion when the ordinance against stage-plays was re-imposed, royalist news-pamphlets appeared in the form of miniature plays, with prologues claiming that they were offering these as alternatives to the forbidden drama’.<sup>17</sup> Dagmar Friest has argued that newsletters were performances of texts through specific information, with ballads used as propaganda by both sides.<sup>18</sup>

Importantly, while the circulation of texts to a private audience of like-minded people was already an established practice (the Countess of Pembroke’s literary coterie being an obvious example), the suppression of the theatres necessitated the practice of what had previously been a matter of choice. This was the culmination of the battle in the early modern period between Catholic and Puritan, cheap print and the stage, strikingly described by Peter Lake and Michel Questier, where plays were replaced by godly pamphlets, and the world became a battleground of good and evil forces<sup>19</sup> Playwriting continued in secret throughout the Civil War and Commonwealth period, becoming linked to the secret

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<sup>17</sup> Lois Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature, 1641 – 1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.34. Future references to this source will be given as the author’s name followed by the page reference.

<sup>18</sup> Dagmar Friest, *Governed by Opinion: Politics, Religion and the Dynamics of Communication in Stuart London 1637 – 1645* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1997). Tessa Watt has discussed the development of the popular ballad and broadside, and their dramatic presentation in public, necessary for their success in *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550 – 1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>19</sup> Lake and Questier have looked in detail at the anti-Puritan polemic of the murder-pamphlet piece, the festive narratives which overturn the moralized pamphlets, and the battle between the popular theatre, Grub Street and the godly clergy for the same, or massively overlapping, audiences. Peter Lake and Michel Questier, *The Antichrist’s Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002). Future references to this source will be given as the authors’ name followed by the page reference.

correspondence, in particular the coded letters between Royalists at home and abroad, and circulating between exiled Royalists in Europe.<sup>20</sup> In exile, courtiers wrote plays which would promote a Royalist view of the Civil War and its aftermath, and which would partly shape the new ‘Restoration comedy’. In the 1660s, alongside plays by Killigrew and Davenant and professional authors such as Brome, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher and Shirley, appeared works by new aristocratic writers such as Roger Boyle the Earl of Orrery, the Howard brothers, Sir Robert Howard and his brother Edward, Henry Jermyn, Baron Jermyn of St Edmundsbury, and George Digby, the Earl of Bristol. Their subject matter often described closely the events of the Civil War, for example Sir Robert Howard’s *The Committee* which I refer to in greater detail in Chapter One.

### **“Cross-over” from performance to reading**

When the authorities banned the performance of plays in public, the audiences had – if they were illiterate - to remember and reenact via the verbal tradition, or – if they were literate – to read and re-read the printed plays. A modern reader often reads a text before its performance and then makes a critical decision as to how ‘well’ the “live” performance conveys the meaning of the play. This is a subjective response to the written text and its success in performance is often judged by how close it comes to the spectator’s initial understanding of the play. Interaction with a play as reader is a different experience from interaction with a play as spectator, as Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker have shown in their

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<sup>20</sup> Potter in particular has discussed the use of codes and codifying in the “underground” literature produced during the Civil War and Commonwealth years, 1641 -1660. Potter, *Secret Rites*, Chapter 4, “Intertextuality and identity: literary codes”, pp. 113-155.



extensive studies of early modern reading. In *Reading Revolutions* Sharpe warned that we cannot assume that text and meaning have organic integrity and coherence, and asked how language itself performs in the Renaissance and later seventeenth century: ‘does the reader manipulate the text or the text manipulate the reader?’<sup>21</sup> The sudden increase in publications of works by English authors in the 1630s (heralded by the *First Folio* of Jonson, and followed by those of Beaumont and Fletcher and Shakespeare) encouraged the growth of a wider, less predictable and therefore less controllable readership, and Sharpe has argued that – for all the attempts to control readers via propaganda – individual imagination and personal judgement developed as a result.<sup>22</sup> Sharpe and Zwicker have suggested that the self was discovered in all these acts of writing and reading, and even the illiterate were enabled to participate in the consumption and interpretation of texts through their public staging.<sup>23</sup> I would suggest that this opportunity for discussion of texts, and the formulation of individual opinion, encouraged the development of a confident, opinionated audience within the Restoration playhouses. Their reactions and understanding were not necessarily sophisticated, but, like any crowd watching a show, their approval or disapproval could make or break a play’s reputation. “Cross-over” plays which had been

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<sup>21</sup> Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 36. Future references to this source will be given as the author’s name followed by a short title and the page reference.

<sup>22</sup> Sharpe has pointed out, ‘The explosion of print during the 1640s created an audience more remote and anonymous, as well as numerous, than any before; an audience harder to read and define or to address from the pulpit of dedication.’ *Reading Revolutions*, p.55.

<sup>23</sup> *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

popular before the Civil War were sometimes less so in the Restoration, but equally, others might be received more kindly.

Committing a text to print had significant implications for its past and future performances on stage. Charles Whitney has looked at reception, appropriation and creative re-performance in Renaissance and early modern theatre and has considered the processes by which texts were originally created. Whitney suggests that authors who build ambiguity into their works have no control over what happens to them later, but proposes that some works are re-read in ways which authors could not have anticipated.<sup>24</sup> Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake have shown how attempts by monarchs and their agents to appropriate and control discourse, and to dictate their subjects' responses, were unsuccessful; the texts were always capable of accommodating variant readings and glosses which accorded less well with the prevailing orthodoxy.<sup>25</sup> As Sharpe and Martin Butler have commented, the most effective courtly plays were vehicles of criticism rather than compliment, and plays of the private theatre were engaged in debating serious and pressing issues.<sup>26</sup> A.H. Tricomi has argued that Caroline opposition drama by Brome, Middleton, Massinger and Denham helped to stimulate the demystification of royalty, courts and courtiers, and signalled the sickness of the

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<sup>24</sup> Charles Whitney, *Early Responses to Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Future references to this source will be given as the author's name followed by the page reference.

<sup>25</sup> *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993, repr. London: Macmillan Press, 1994).

<sup>26</sup> Butler, *Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642*; Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Future references to the work by Sharpe will be given as the author's name followed by the short title and page reference.

state.<sup>27</sup> Early seventeenth-century men and women were accustomed to analyse and debate; it was also the time when Puritanism with its emphasis on public preaching by men and by women was able to emerge as a significant presence in England. This atmosphere of debate cannot have been completely suppressed by the Interregnum, although Martin Butler has suggested that the return of Charles II may have meant that ‘the world of teeming radical thought and freedom was ruthlessly suppressed’ whilst government propaganda was disseminated through “a monopoly by the two courtiers, Davenant and Killigrew.’ (Butler, p. 287) It is, however, possible that the people’s view may also have serendipitously coincided with the King’s in the kind of plays which they wanted to see revived on the stage, although it is more likely that Charles II was keen to encourage a close empathy with the people and ensure his popularity.

### **“Cross-over” from reading to re-staging**

The effect of re-staging a play during the Restoration period can be seen to work on physical, intellectual and emotional levels. Matthew Wikander has pointed out how the entire meaning of a piece can be transformed purely by its staging in different contexts and environments, instancing the way in which William Cartwright’s *The Royal Slave* (1639) changed its identity from being a reverential masque performed by Oxford University scholars to a more trivial ‘holiday play’ when performed by the professional actors, the King’s Men.<sup>28</sup> There is the

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<sup>27</sup> Albert H. Tricomi, *Anticourt Drama in England 1603 – 1642* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989).

<sup>28</sup> Matthew H. Wikander, *Princes to Act: Royal Audience and Royal Performance, 1578-1792* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 124 – 128.

practical re-staging: the reopening of the playhouses which re-used and re-worked the spaces of former tennis courts;<sup>29</sup> the re-using of props, costumes and text; and the re-engagement of actors who had performed before the closure of the theatres in 1642.<sup>30</sup> Further questions are raised by the choice of plays for re-staging, and the new ways they would have been received by performers and audience in terms of social context and personal experience (post-war, post republic, pre-Restoration, pre-monarchy). Wendy Griswold has commented on this difference between ‘representation and the real thing’:

To understand revivals, one must first understand how cultural objects actually work. Consider the process whereby a powerful cultural object possesses the symbolic capacity to enable a significant portion of a population to ‘communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.’<sup>31</sup>

It is of course not possible to repeat any performance exactly like the previous one - every one is different. We talk of revivals, and to revive means to breathe life back into something. In a sense every performance after the first one

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Future references to this source will be given as the author’s name followed by the page reference.

<sup>29</sup> The King’s Company occupied the former tennis court in Vere Street; the Duke’s Company that in Lincoln’s Inn Fields. Soon Killigrew moved from Vere Street to a small purpose-built playhouse in Bridges Street.

<sup>30</sup> A few actors survived from the pre-Civil War days, and they trained the new younger actors in the “nurseries”. George Jolly, whose company had entertained Charles II in exile, was a serious rival to Davenant and Killigrew, until they persuaded the King to revoke his licence in 1663. Jolly subsequently set up a nursery to train young actors. Davenant also established a nursery for the Duke’s Company. Leslie Hotson has given an account of “Stage Nurseries in London”. Hotson, p. 176 – 196. The nurseries are noted in *The London Stage*, Part I, p xxxviii – xxxix, and mention is made of the revivals of plays by the young apprentices of Davenant’s Duke of York’s company, p. xcvi.

<sup>31</sup> Griswold, *Renaissance Revivals*, p 201, and footnote p. 268 which quotes Clifford Geertz’ definition of culture in *The Interpretation of Cultures: selected essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973). Future references to this source will be given as the author’s name followed by the page reference.

could be described as a revival; the piece will be changed by the way in which the actors perform it. Theatre relies for its effect on the live performances of its actors, on the spark of excitement caused by an unexpected delivery of a line which might change the way in which the scene is played in that performance. It also relies on the performers' interaction and development of a relationship with the audience. The Restoration took advantage of the thrust stage to encourage this, literally bringing the actors amongst their audience, and the actors were expert improvisers, drawing the spectators into their play-world by means of dialogue, some rehearsed, some improvised.<sup>32</sup> This sense of the collusion of actors and audience, and of author and audience – familiar to Renaissance audiences – is continued and developed by Killigrew and Jordan in their “cross-over” comedies, as I show in Chapters Three and Four.

Therefore, despite the return of some actors to the boards and the revival of “cross-over” texts, the performances were not merely re-creations of those seen in Charles I's day – although Davenant was keen to communicate the old style of performance where he could.<sup>33</sup> Circumstances necessitated a combination of old

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<sup>32</sup> A famous instance of improvisation which went wrong concerned Charles II's favourite comedian, John Lacy, was censored by the king when his ad-libbing in Edward Howard's *A Change of Crownes* (1667) became too personally offensive. Samuel Pepys recorded the affair: '16 April 1667: Knipp tells me the King was so angry at the liberty taken by Lacy's part to abuse him to his face, that he commanded they should act no more, till Moone went and got leave for them to act again; but not this play.' *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* ed. by Robert C Latham and William Matthews (London: G.Bell, 1970 – 1983), VIII, p. 168. Future references to this source will be given as the author's name followed by the page reference.

<sup>33</sup> 'The part of the King [in the revival of *Henry VIII*] was so right and justly done by Mr *Betterton*, he being instructed in it by Sir *William*, who had it from old Mr *Lowen*, that had his instructions from Mr *Shakespear* himself, that I dare and will aver, none can, or will come near him in this Age, in the performance of that part.' John Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus, or an Historical Review of the Stage 1708*

and new which automatically generated a new performance. The series of “runs” of a play were not as common in the seventeenth century as they are now, and applied only to extremely successful plays – normally a different play would be given each day.<sup>34</sup>

In Chapter One I identify the different ways in which pre-war professional authors and post-war court authors depict the same material – relating to the recent Civil War – to reflect their differing viewpoints and intentions. Although the apparent revival of pre-war comedies formed part of the deliberate use of nostalgia by the image-conscious Charles II to recreate the appearance of a stable monarchy as quickly as possible, the post-war Restoration authors constructed their own literary inheritance, rewriting the past for each other and for their successors as they would have liked to believe it. In her study of tragicomedy, Nancy Klein Maguire has argued that truth thereby gives way to artificiality, or to a fantasy which, lacking essential substance, destabilized the society which Charles II aimed to establish (Maguire, p. 214). I question Maguire’s reading: in my view Charles II encouraged the re-shaping and re-writing of the plays because he wished to proclaim a different manifesto for a changed monarchy, partly to show that he had learned the lessons of his father’s mistakes, and partly to establish his own identity as a post-war ‘modern’ monarch. Restaging the plays

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ed. by Judith Mihous and Robert D Hume (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1987), pp. 55-56.

<sup>34</sup> The first known series of performances of a single play occurred in 1624, when Middleton’s *A Game at Chess* was staged by the King’s Men at the Globe for nine consecutive nights. Although this practice was repeated in the Restoration, it indicated a particularly successful play; only in the early eighteenth century did managers feel confident enough to introduce the “benefit night” for the authors and star actors, assuming the run would last for more than three nights.

which were enjoyed in his father's reign, with a reinterpretation in the light of the war and Republic, was a powerful way of establishing his authority.

### **“Cross-over” of the monarchy**

The accession of Charles II, erstwhile Prince of Wales, the “rightful” son and heir, could have been experienced by contemporaries as a “cross-over” from one monarch to another, via the transitional period described variously as “the Commonwealth”, “the Protectorate years”, and “the Interregnum” – the last term conveying a sense that the monarchy was not destroyed and would return. The symbolism of the crown passing from one Charles to another was strong – and acquired a neat symmetry in 1685 when James II succeeded his brother Charles II, following his father Charles I, and his grandfather James I.

The monarchs' strikingly different personalities are expressed in the kinds of drama they encouraged, and particularly in their performances within public spectacles at Court such as masques. Matthew Wikander has commented that ‘Playing the king and being the king are not essentially different activities, for the thing itself is as much an imagined construct as any part a playwright might sketch for a player’ (Wikander, p.4). Jonathan Goldberg has shown how the shrewd politician Elizabeth I served as both the focus of adulatory pageants and the speaking goddess-figure who directed that focus. By contrast, James I appeared as a god-figure in the pageants, using silence as a powerful means of conveying his ‘otherness’, and creating an equally powerful symbol of the king as

a person set apart from his subjects by his divinity.<sup>35</sup> Graham Parry has argued that belief in the divine approval of his kingship permeated James I's rule, while Charles I's natural aloofness led to his being viewed as haughty, and his isolation from his subjects was exacerbated by his ruling alone without a Parliament.<sup>36</sup> Kevin Sharpe has questioned this idea: 'where [James I] most differed from Queen Elizabeth was not in remoteness... but in his endless interventions, with his pen and in person, in the discourse and turmoil of politics', while 'Charles I intended a shift in political as well as personal style'.<sup>37</sup> Whatever may have been Charles I's intentions, his failure to engage with his subjects clearly contributed to the outbreak of the civil war and finally resulted in his trial and execution at their hands.<sup>38</sup>

Silence was used effectively by James I to convey a sense of his own royalty, to imply discretion and necessary secrecy - and disastrously by Charles I to convey a sense of his distance from his people, because his innate shyness was misinterpreted as loftiness. In striking contrast to his predecessors, Charles II, approachable and visible, has fascinated historians. The traditional image of the easy-going 'Merry Monarch', popular with his people, has been challenged by

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<sup>35</sup> Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne and Their Contemporaries* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983).

<sup>36</sup> Graham Parry, *The Golden Age Restor'd: the Culture of the Stuart Court, 1603-42* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), p. 22.

<sup>37</sup> Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2010), p. 121. Future references to this source will be given as the author's name and short title followed by the page reference.

<sup>38</sup> Previously Sharpe offered an apologia for the reserved monarch, arguing that Charles I was not tyrannical or absolutist, but was trying to rule the country, to control the socially disruptive and politically subversive Puritans, and feeling he was not receiving the support of Parliament. Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 59.



modern scholars such as Tim Harris and Jenny Uglow, who have emphasised Charles II's cynicism and his brilliant political gamesmanship in turning to his advantage an apparently weak position, dependent on his parliament for money, on popular support for his throne, and on his cousin Louis XIV for his political stability.<sup>39</sup> As Robert Appelbaum has pointed out, the concept of the 'restoration' of Charles II was problematic because the king had been allowed back to the throne by the people, and was now under their control. He could not be the absolutist monarch his grandfather and father had been – the people had learned that they possessed the capacity to wreak drastic social upheaval.<sup>40</sup> Jonathan Sawday has highlighted the ambiguity of this historical moment: was the arrival of Charles II to be understood as restoration of the old regime, or the founding moment of a new?<sup>41</sup> As I shall show later, this ambiguity was also sensed by some of the contemporary authors, particularly Killigrew and Cowley, and was reflected in their fascination with the relationship between reality and fantasy; between self and self-image.

Charles II brought back a court of old war veterans, but also disaffected youths who had been stifled in exile and now wanted a life of pleasure. Anna

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<sup>39</sup> Jenny Uglow has depicted the King as 'a gambling man,' staking his position and throne on clever and unexpected manouvres, never revealing his real intentions in *A Gambling Man: Charles II and the Restoration* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009).

<sup>40</sup> 'In the world of the Restoration the citizenry has learned that it possesses within itself the capacity of drastic social upheaval.' Robert Appelbaum, *Literature and Utopian Politics in Seventeenth Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 216. Future references to this source will be given as the author's name followed by the page reference.

<sup>41</sup> Jonathan Sawday, 'Re-Writing a Revolution: History, Symbols and Text in the Restoration', *Seventeenth Century* 7.2 (1992), 171- 99. Future references to this source will be given as the author's name followed by the page reference.

Bryson has suggested that the stereotype of the rake now emerged in comedy as the young cavaliers of the 1650s reacted against the repressive Puritan regime: ‘...the disruptive effect of the wars and the exile of leading Royalists rather than the Puritan ascendancy *per se* may be regarded as a principal immediate cause of the wildness of manners amongst young gallants in London.’<sup>42</sup> But, as Paul Hardacre has pointed out, their exile had been far from sterile and unproductive.<sup>43</sup> The exiles gained knowledge and broadened their minds during their exposure to European values and influence, and Charles II himself was moulded by his experiences in exile. The myth of the monarch created in the 1660s was very different from earlier Royal myths as the Restoration was transformed into a ‘marriage ceremony’ with Charles II in the role of beloved bridegroom returning from exile and England as his Jerusalem/bride.<sup>44</sup>

Reinvention was the basis of the Restoration. Nancy Klein Maguire has suggested that most of the new playwrights were ‘politicians who became playwrights either to gain or to enhance their political credibility... [they] defended the traditional power-structure in an attempt to rehabilitate themselves and their culture.’ (Maguire, p. 3) Importantly, as Susan Wiseman has pointed out, the propagandists glossed over the fact that it was the restored King’s father, Charles I, who had forced the country to take sides: ‘The Restoration remembers

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<sup>42</sup> Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 256.

<sup>43</sup> Paul Hardacre, *The Royalists during the Puritan Revolution* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956).

<sup>44</sup> ‘What is also apparent is the ways in which the Restoration itself is being transformed into a marriage ceremony with Charles in the role of the bridegroom and England in the role of bride – an iconography which carries with it triumphal scriptural echoes. England and Charles, the subliminal message seems to be asserting, stand in the same relationship to one another as Christ and the Church – wedded to each other in a act of literal and symbolic union.’ Sawday, 181.

the Civil War in a process of simplification and selective forgiving.’ (Wiseman, p. 217)

Scholars have agreed that Charles II was determined ‘never to go upon [his] travels again’, although his popularity with his subjects waned dramatically after only seven years upon the throne. Samuel Pepys lamented in 1667, ‘We run over many persons and things, and see nothing done like men like to do well while the King minds his pleasures so much. We did bemoan it that nobody would or had authority enough with the King to tell him how all things go to wrack and will be lost.’<sup>45</sup>

Charles II was criticised by disappointed contemporaries for his sensual excesses, and for his encouragement of a libidinous court which implied his faulty political judgement.<sup>46</sup> The main charge leveled at the restored King by some contemporaries and also by modern scholars is that of laziness, or indifference and overwhelming hedonism; he would sacrifice the monarchy to his lusts. Susan J Owen has commented on the problems posed for the Stuarts by the disparity between patriarchalist ideology and the perceived reality; whereas Charles I was seen as virtuous but impotent, unable to be a good father to the nation, Charles II was seen as scattering his seed irresponsibly, father to an illegitimate nation which

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<sup>45</sup> Pepys, VIII, p. 68, entry for 17 February 1667. John Evelyn was to lament, ‘I saw this evening such a sceane of profuse gaming, and luxurious dallying & prophanesse, the King in the midst of his 3 concubines, as I had never before.’ *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. by Guy de la Bédoyère, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.311. Future references to this source will be given as the author’s name followed by the page reference.

<sup>46</sup> On 29 July 1667, Pepys commented, ‘I believe the greatest that ever Parliament was, to see themselves so fooled and the nation in certain condition of ruin, while the king, they see, is only governed by his lust and women and rogues about him.’ Pepys VIII, p 361.

he could never fully secure.<sup>47</sup> In my view, the benefit to Charles II of creating a sexually voracious court living mainly for pleasure is that his enemies were lulled by the false impression of a king who would be easy to control and overthrow if necessary. The fact that Charles II reigned uninterrupted for twenty-five years, while his younger brother James managed only three must be partly attributed to a shrewd political mind and diplomatic brilliance which lurked behind the playboy's mask.

Richard Ollard has aptly commented that Charles II 'reigned in the shadow of his father's scaffold'.<sup>48</sup> As Susan Staves has pointed out, the execution of Charles I had had a confusing effect on the people; instead of the wrath of God being brought down on the Puritans, the regicide appeared to have been sanctioned by divine authority.<sup>49</sup> In fact, as Martin Butler has pointed out, Puritanism was not an attitude exclusively directed against theatre-going; antitheaticity functioned more as an attack on Charles I's character and his failure to be a good king (Butler, p. 86). Although Cromwell was the butt of Royalist satires such as *The Committee Man Curried* (1647) *The Famous Tragedie of Charles I* (1649) and *New Market Fayre* (1651), he recognised the value of theatrical performances, both at court and at home.<sup>50</sup> It seems

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<sup>47</sup> Susan J Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). Future references to this source will be given as the author's name followed by the page reference.

<sup>48</sup> Richard Ollard, *The Image of the King: Charles I and Charles II*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979, rep. Phoenix Press, 2000), p.21.

<sup>49</sup> Susan Staves, *Players' Scepters: Fictions of Authority in the Restoration* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), p.3.

<sup>50</sup> A revival of Shirley's tragicomedy *Cupid and Death* was performed at Whitehall in 1653, and there is evidence that Cromwell himself played the role of Menelaus/Jove in a masque staged to celebrate his daughter Mary's wedding in 1657. (Clare, p. 177.)

increasingly likely that, left to themselves, the playhouses might have been reopened during the Protectorate, and under Protectorate control. Parliamentary debates about the need for moral reform of the theatre were taken up and developed by Davenant, who persuaded Cromwell to allow him to stage private theatricals, implying that a reformed theatre may well have reopened had Cromwell survived. Susan Wiseman has argued that Davenant manipulated Cromwell's secret desire to enjoy all the trappings of kingship, playing on his enjoyment of musical entertainments as an excuse to stage operatic entertainments at Rutland House. I agree that this was a major incentive to Cromwell to accommodate as far as possible Davenant's attempts to restore theatrical entertainments in the later 1650s. The figures of the returning Stuart dynasty dominate the 1660s, but Cromwell's legacy was significant as the Protector who permitted Sir William Davenant to take the first steps towards the reopening and revival of the English theatre.

By the time Charles II arrived back in England, three companies – Michael Mohun's players at The Red Bull, John Rhodes' players at the Cockpit, and William Beeston's "Boys" at Salisbury Court – were openly performing on London stages, as various troupes had illicitly done during the Interregnum period.<sup>51</sup> The restoration of the monarchy was perhaps coincidental to the restoration of the theatre. Charles II was responding to the signs of continued and

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<sup>51</sup> Davenant had also staged some entertainments at the Cockpit in 1658. As John Stubbs has remarked, 'How he was allowed to do so was a mystery to his admirers and enemies alike.' John Stubbs, *Reprobates: The Cavaliers of the English Civil War* (London: Penguin Books, Viking, 2011), p. 436. Future references to this source will be given as the author's name followed by the page reference.

developing theatrical activity in the later Commonwealth years, rather than reopening the theatres from scratch. The theatre had “crossed over” from his father’s reign to his own, via the Protectorate.

### **“Cross-over” of theatres and companies**

The Stuart involvement with the theatre was well-established in contemporaries’ minds, so much so that, as Andrew Gurr has commented, the closure of the private playhouses by Parliament in 1642 was ‘the clearest measure of the Court’s loss of power.’<sup>52</sup> The Royal children had been patrons of theatre companies from birth. Charles I possessed a huge library of plays, and criticised and annotated authors’ texts, comments which were passed back to the Master of Revels to aid the censorship of, and perceived improvements to, the texts.<sup>53</sup> The Royal women particularly enjoyed performing; Anna of Denmark famously appeared in a masque at court, with black face and breasts exposed, and it was the appearance of Charles I’s wife Henrietta Maria in a masque which led to the punishment by mutilation of William Prynne, one of the many events inciting public unrest in

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<sup>52</sup> Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574 – 1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.12.

<sup>53</sup> Sir Henry Herbert was at times overly scrupulous in his censorship of obscenity and bad language within plays. When Davenant (via his friend the poet Endymion Porter) questioned the King’s reported dislike of the oaths in the submitted script of *The Wits*. Herbert was forced to wave through the oaths, which Charles I viewed as ‘mere asseverations’. But Davenant’s triumph over the Master of the Revels was shortlived, when, after the play’s performance, the King made it clear that he objected not to the dialogue, but to what he judged to be a thin plot and badly drawn characters. *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama – the Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels 1623-73* ed. by N.W. Bawcutt, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), pp. 186-187. Future references to this source will be given as the author’s name followed by the page reference.

pre-war days.<sup>54</sup> Aged four, the future Charles II had been given his ‘own’ company, and this began a life-long enjoyment of the theatre; he continued to maintain a company for as long as possible when in exile at the French court.<sup>55</sup>

The “cross-over” of actors from Charles I’s companies to Charles II’s was swift. Mohun, Beeston and Rhodes began staging plays in the late 1650s with men who had fought in the war, been in exile on the Continent, and laid low at home.<sup>56</sup> They trained some of the future Restoration stars including Thomas Betterton, Charles Hart and Cave Underhill. The cross-over process was therefore closely demonstrated by actors who had genuinely begun their careers in one reign, under one King, and who then went on to play before his son for a couple of decades before their retirement.<sup>57</sup> The successful petitioning of the King by Killigrew and Davenant resulted in the closure of other companies run by John Rhodes, William Beeston and (later) George Jolly, and the creation of one company only – His

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<sup>54</sup> William Prynne had his ears cropped and was imprisoned for writing that women actresses were notorious whores, in a clear reference to Henrietta Maria and her court ladies who enjoyed performing in private theatricals.

<sup>55</sup> George Jolly took a company to the Hague but also entertained Charles II in Frankfurt during his exile. The King also had a company of players in Paris, and Hotson speculated that Jolly may have been one of their number. See Hotson, p. 170.

<sup>56</sup> Major Michael Mohun was one of the young actors in the King’s Company before the Civil War, fought on the Royalist side and then returned to run an unlicensed troupe at the Red Bull and Cockpit theatres in 1659. Alongside him was Charles Hart, and these two joined Killigrew in the King’s Company a year later. Mohun, Hart and the comedian John Lacy were given the extra responsibility of directing the rest of the cast in performance, until Killigrew decided that this arrangement needed to be changed as it gave them too much power as against his other hirelings. *The London Stage* I, p. lviii.

<sup>57</sup> Mohun left the stage in 1682, as did many of the older actors, when the King’s Company and Duke’s Company merged to form the United Company. A *Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers & other Stage Personnel in London, 1660 – 1800* ed. by Philip Highfill Jr., and others, 16 vols (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973-1993), x, pp. 272-276.

Majesty's Comedians – combining many of the original personnel of the other companies.<sup>58</sup> Killigrew and Davenant managed to co-exist as managers for a couple of months, but in November 1660 they went their separate ways and formed the King's Company and Duke's Company respectively.<sup>59</sup> Although the idea of theatres under Royal patronage remained, therefore, there was a “cross-over” from five companies to two. Run by two of his courtiers, these companies were more tightly under the King's control. The King's regular visits to the public theatres brought him into the midst of his people; he was also able to sense the popular mood and remain aware of any potential uprisings in a different way from his father and grandfather.<sup>60</sup> Charles II's security depended on the personal popularity of the monarch, not upon the divine right of kings.

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<sup>58</sup> Davenant and Killigrew showed impressive ruthlessness in getting rid of their opposition. Killigrew was even accused of bullying by some of his actors: Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, received a petition from Theophilus Burt and others of the King's Company on 14 August 1660, pleading for protection from their manager Killigrew. (Bawcutt, pp. 225-6).

<sup>59</sup> According to the rosters of *The London Stage*, Killigrew took the older, more experienced actors such as Walter Clun, John Lacy, Michael Mohun and Edward Kynaston, while Davenant took the younger inexperienced actors, future stars of the Restoration theatre, such as Thomas Betterton and James Nokes. *The London Stage* I, pp. 15-16.

<sup>60</sup> The ever opportunistic Davenant published a poetic paeon of praise to the new King, emphasising his compassion and accessibility:

To *You*, who still are easie of access,  
 Suitors can need no Guide but their distress.  
 And though Distress long in complaint appears,  
 That length no measure with your patience bears.  
*You* can indure a tedious narrative,  
 And suffer the Afflicted to believe  
 His Case is not as others cases are,  
 But intricate, and very singular;  
 And that it never yet at best appear'd  
 Because he never has bin *fully heard*.

Sir William Davenant, *Poem to the King's most Sacred Majesty*, (1663), in *Sir William Davenant: the Shorter Poems, and Songs from the Plays and Masques* ed. by AM Gibbs (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), p. 237, ll 237- 46.



The introduction of women onto the stage is arguably the event for which the Restoration theatre managers are most famous. This overshadows the experimentation with staging and with writing which was also taking place at this time, and it is also misleading; as I have noted, women had performed in private theatricals for some years, although indeed some theatre practitioners assumed they would not perform in public after the war.<sup>61</sup> The startling effect of the actresses was their part in bridging the gap between Court and City, crossing over classes and environs; the breeches roles which Nell Gwynn and others popularised created a *frisson* on the public stage for all the spectators, not just the King and Court. Female authority and financial independence might initially be implied in the development of the “breeches” role, with its assumption of apparent maleness; however, putting a woman in breeches increasingly emphasised her sexuality, rather than implying a male authority. By the 1660s there is a sense that the patriarchal system, like other belief systems within Charles I’s society, had been undermined and changed along the way.<sup>62</sup> I argue in Chapters Three and Four that Killigrew and Davenant aimed to establish a more subtly patriarchal Restoration society, centred on the figure of the King, which still places women in a subservient relationship to men, whilst ostensibly retaining their freedom of

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John Evelyn was to summarise Charles II as ‘A prince of many virtues, & many greate Imperfections, Debonaire, Easy of accesse, not bloudy or Cruel’. (Evelyn, p.312.)

<sup>61</sup> “Our boyes, *ere we shall have libertie to act againe*, will be growne out of use like crackt organ-pipes, and have faces as old as our flags.” Jordan, *Actors Remonstrance*, p. 6, my emphasis.

<sup>62</sup> In his discussion of Cavalier poetry, James Biester has commented on “how successful the first Stuart had been in establishing the absolutist tenet that kings are not to be judged, even if the second Stuart was soon to learn, keenly, that such deference was something less than universal.” James Biester, *Lyric Wonder: Rhetoric and Wit in Renaissance English Poetry* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1997), p.154.

speech and greater control of their lives. Although there was an emphasis on women as commodities in Restoration plays, the actresses' collusion with this commodification by playing the parts onstage paradoxically continued to empower women within Restoration society. Their "display" in the breeches roles, for example, presented them as sex objects, but also gained them aristocratic admirers and financial security.<sup>63</sup>

### **"Cross-over" of audience**

The audiences of Charles I's London had access to five companies performing a variety of comedies, histories, and tragedies at three public playhouses, while the King, possibly as part of his self-staging of Royal remoteness, saw performances at Court.<sup>64</sup> During the Commonwealth, public performances of plays were illicit; the audiences saw them in inn-yards, sometimes as part of wider entertainment, such as bear-baiting or prize-fighting.<sup>65</sup> Dramatic pamphlet dialogues were also staged in the churches, performed from the pulpit to a God-fearing congregation.

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<sup>63</sup> The more famous examples were Nell Gwynn, mistress of the King and Elizabeth Barry, mistress of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester. Kirsten Pullen shows how women used performance to negotiate prevailing constructions of female sexuality and moral stigma. Kirsten Pullen, 'Actresses and Whores: Onstage and in Society', *Theatre Journal* 59.2 (2007), 320-21.

<sup>64</sup> 'The decorums of court performances work to reinforce royal difference at the same time as they call attention to the royal audience as rival performer.' Wikander, p. 14.

<sup>65</sup> Hyder E Rollins, in 'A Contribution to the History of the English Commonwealth Drama', *Studies in Philology* 18.3 (1921) 267- 233, gives a detailed account of theatrical performance activity during the 'closure' of the playhouses.

As Nigel Smith has commented, the closure of the playhouses resulted in ‘a migration of dramatic resources to the arena of the pamphlet’.<sup>66</sup>

Wendy Griswold has described a ‘cultural diamond’ of which the audience is one point:

A particular type of social world encourages certain groups of people, and not others, to become playwrights; it encourages certain groups and not others, to constitute an audience. The tastes of this audience and the professional concerns of these playwrights shape the plays that get produced. Thus the resulting drama will be selective in its social representations, emphasizing certain aspects of social experience and ignoring or observing others. (Griswold, pp. 25-6)

When Charles II commanded the official reopening of the theatres, the audiences’ make-up became wider; courtiers, gentry, citizens and merchants mingled in the public arena, without segregation other than the prices of their seats. Increased seat prices, however, were significant in that, although there was a wider audience, it tended to be the gentry and monied merchant classes who had the means to attend most often, in contrast to the pre-Civil War period, when the apprentices and artisans were more regular visitors.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, Alan Richard Botica has described ‘a mixed audience within a segmented society’ who all gathered together at the playhouse.<sup>68</sup> Many of them had not seen a play performed in England for years, and some may never have seen a play performed at all.

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<sup>66</sup> Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England 1640-1660* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 70.

<sup>67</sup> Typical seat prices were 4 shillings for the boxes; 2 shillings and 6 pence for the pit; 1 shilling and 6 pence for the middle gallery; and 1 shilling for the upper gallery.

<sup>68</sup> Botica has estimated that, between 1660 and 1676, the annual attendance at each playhouse was in the region of 90,000 – 100,000 spectators, although enthusiastic theatregoers like Samuel Pepys would visit several times a year. Alan Richard Botica, ‘Audience, Playhouse, Play in Restoration Theatre 1660-1710’ (unpublished DPhil thesis, Oxford University, 1985), pp. 122 and 133.

These changes altered audience's responses to plays and actors, as did the emphasis on a popular response. For the first time a commoner, whose status and occupation would previously have placed him/her outside the Royal environment, was watching the same performance as his/her King in exactly the same place and at the same time. Although Martin Butler has seen such performances as opportunities for government propaganda, I would argue that, since the public paid to see the spectacle of theatre, they consequently exerted a certain degree of control. Plays which were poorly attended ran no chance of communicating their message sufficiently widely for propaganda purposes.<sup>69</sup> Control and regulation of theatrical power was an important political goal but a practical impossibility.

With the growth of the propertied middle-class merchants, and increased trading routes between London and Europe, Restoration audiences were more socially mobile than their Jacobean and Caroline predecessors, and Charles II's unusual accessibility and encouragement of his subjects ensured the popularity of the playhouses as social venues. The huge significance of the King's visits to the playhouses with his family and entourage should not be underestimated; previously any visits to the playhouse at Blackfriars had been for private performances, as though they were at Court, and no monarch had ever sat amongst his people in this way. Looking back on theatre practice before and after the Civil War, Thomas Killigrew later told Samuel Pepys:

[...] that the stage is now by [Charles II's] pains a thousand times better and more glorious than ever before[...] Then, the Queen seldom and the

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<sup>69</sup> As Botica has commented, "Restoration public playhouses were not transformed into playthings of the court. If anything the familiarity between the monarch and his subjects resulted in the playthings of the court becoming open to the public: the remote and ritualised entertainments at Whitehall came to be seen as events of common interest." (*Ibid.*, p. 49).

King never would come; now, not the King only for state, but all civil people do think they may come as well as any.<sup>70</sup>

Deborah Payne has identified the development of the theatre from being a relatively specific marketplace during the first half of the seventeenth century to a marketplace of generalized exchange during the Restoration.<sup>71</sup> The audiences were more consistently civilian; many of the gentry were still returning from exile on their country estates or abroad. The messages delivered via the public performances of the drama were designed to appeal to a more educated and sophisticated clientele. 'The prologue and the epilogue were therefore a kind of acknowledgement of a social occasion: before the play began, and immediately it had ended, London society became part of the show.'<sup>72</sup> Taking the King's private theatricals into the public arena represented a closer conversation between monarch and people. Shared enjoyment strengthened the bond between them; dissent might be played out in public via discussions of a play. Either way the transparency of such an exchange reduced the dangers of conspiratorial plotting underground.

### **“Cross-over” styles**

The execution of Charles I by members of his former parliament shocked contemporaries, who found it difficult - almost impossible - to accept. Almost as though reflecting this collective disbelief, scholars and critics have found it

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<sup>70</sup> Pepys, entry for 12 February 1667, VIII, pp. 55-56.

<sup>71</sup> Deborah Payne, 'Patronage and the Dramatic Marketplace under Charles I and II', *The Yearbook of English Studies* 21 (1991), 137-52.

<sup>72</sup> James Sutherland, 'Prologues, Epilogues and Audiences in the Restoration Theatre', in *Of Books and Humankind: Essays and Poems presented to Bonamy Dobree*, ed. by John Butt (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 37-54 (pp. 38, 39).

difficult to reconcile various interpretations of its historical and literary significance. Larry Carver has suggested that the King in his role as ‘father of the people’ was essentially murdered by his ‘children’, his subjects, and that the execution was an act of patricide, while for Jonathan Sawday the slaughtered king’s image acts as legitimisation for the new king.<sup>73</sup> Matthew Wikander has suggested that ‘the British regicide was also an assault upon theater [...] playing the role of martyred king to perfection, Charles rejuvenated the mystique of royalty.’ (Wikander, pp. 2, 3). Lois Potter has argued that Charles I and Charles II were both committed to sustaining the mystique and significance of the figure of the monarch, whether alive or dead - the two kings enacted and were portrayed as enacting ‘virtually every role available to a ruler in romance or drama: the disguised lover, the husband parted from his wife/kingdom, the loving father of his country, the sacrificial vision, the wandering prince.’ (Potter, p. 107)

With both Stuarts playing the romantic hero in this way, it is not surprising that at this time the tragicomedy emerged, but scholars again differ in their analysis of its significance in seventeenth-century English dramatic history. Lois Potter has seen the tragicomedy as providing a reflection of the turbulent world after 1642: ‘For royalists, the world after 1642 *was* an appalling confusion of classes, creeds, and genres, and the only acceptable model for events was one in which a divine purpose could be seen fulfilling itself slowly but surely.’ (Potter, p.107) However, Nancy Klein Maguire has suggested that the development of the tragicomedy forms a proactive apology to Charles II from his subjects - ‘the Restoration propaganda machine relentlessly exploited the guilt association with

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<sup>73</sup> Larry Carver, ‘The Restoration Poets and their Father King’, *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 40.4 (1977), 332-51.

the act of regicide.’ (Maguire, p. 6) In Maguire’s view, the royalist theatre managers, Killigrew and Davenant, and other royalist authors apparently spoke for the people in wishing to make reparation to the king for their passive involvement in the death of his father, although David Norbrook has argued that not everybody wanted to be involved in this collective act of apology.<sup>74</sup> For Maguire, the decline of the tragedy at this period can be attributed to authors’ sense that the reality of death as portrayed in Charles I’s execution was too strong for the audiences to accept the fictional deaths in tragedy; every play now had to have a positive ending. Less convinced by this argument, Susan J Owen has described the royalist heroic play as ‘an attempt to paper over ideological cracks.’ (Owen, p. 19) Potter, Maguire and Owen have suggested that the choice of certain dramatic forms over others was a way in which the authors could respond to real events while influencing the development of later seventeenth-century dramatic writing.<sup>75</sup> This seems to me to be a convincing interpretation, as authors looked to regain some form of literary control over real events which had proved to be unmanageable. It is interesting, from the viewpoint of my thesis, that the revival of comedy, by its very nature a challenge to social conventions and assumptions, is used in the Restoration as a way to re-establish and define the social ‘norm’.

In the 1630s Charles I’s courtiers wrote and staged entertainments at Whitehall; on the public stages, plays by Jonson, Brome, Shakespeare and

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<sup>74</sup> David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics 1627 – 1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>75</sup> Although, as Aparna Dharwadker has noted, it might be argued that genre was used as the medium of a political message, and influenced the choice of tragicomedy, tragedy and comedy for particular subjects. Aparna Dharwadker, ‘The Comedy of Dispossession’, *Studies in Philology* 95.4 (1998), 411-434.

Beaumont and Fletcher were popular, especially city comedies satirising London society, the country gentry, court aristocracy, London merchants, and the divide between town and country depicted through the ‘escape’ of town-dwellers into the country, or country-dwellers arriving in town.<sup>76</sup> The plays performed on the Restoration stage were also often satirical, and although written by the same aristocrats and their friends who had once pleased the Court, they were the product of ten years of bitter war and subsequent exile. Most of the aristocratic playwrights who emerged in the 1660s had had their estates sequestered, but there was a clear distinction between the aristocratic authors who were sequestered, such as Killigrew’s elder brother Sir Peter, and Royalist semi-professional authors such as Davenant and Killigrew, who were not sufficiently wealthy to attract fines.<sup>77</sup> The loss of money and lands may not have affected them in material terms, but nevertheless a burning sense of loss, alienation, and injustice underlies the plays written at this period. The idea of patronage also changed; from the security of the patron who could finance and underwrite the productions, now the erstwhile patrons themselves were writing to be heard. Drama was the ‘ideal vehicle for expressing the outlook of a landed but discontented class,’ (Butler, p. 54). Janet Clare has suggested, ‘As royalist gentry withdrew from London to those estates which had not been sequestered, it is highly possible that play production

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<sup>76</sup> Although Kevin Sharpe challenges this view, arguing that this emphasis upon the contrast of Court and country was not a particular feature of Caroline drama, whose themes were as wide-ranging as any in Renaissance drama. Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment*, p. 43.

<sup>77</sup> Entries for Thomas Killigrew’s brother Sir Peter (p. 192), the Master of the Revels, Sir Henry Herbert (p. 427), Davenant’s friend, Endymion Porter (p. 431), and Sir Robert Howard (p. 436) amongst others appear in the *Calendar of the Proceedings for the Committee for the Advancement of Monye 1642 - 1658*, ed. by Mary Anne Everett Green, (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1888), I.



comprised part of their entertainment: a pastime which reaffirmed royalist culture while expressing opposition to the order of the Commonwealth.’ (Clare, p. 7). The satire was anti-Puritan, but more specific than Jonson’s; Sir Robert Howard’s *Committee* attacked the corrupt officials in charge of sequestration, for example, and the Rump Parliament was criticised by the Royalist city author John Tatham in a distinctively journalistic style developing from the pamphlet plays.

The old plays which were immediately revived were chosen for their relevance: Brome’s *Jovial Crew* depicted the perils as well as the joys of vagrancy, for instance, and for those in the audience who had returned from exile (including the King and court) this may have brought back memories. Abraham Cowley’s revision of his 1650 comedy *The Guardian* emphasised the corruption on both sides in *Cutter of Coleman Street* (1663). Cowley ‘holds, as ‘twere, a mirror up to nature’ and this was surely uncomfortable for some to view. Edward Burns has explored whether the original audiences of *Cutter of Coleman Street* were dismayed by the play’s uncompromising realism, following the more formal orderly Caroline comedies.<sup>78</sup> Cowley’s realism is part of the newly emerging Restoration comedy, developed by satirists such as John Tatham and John Wilson, which I discuss in Chapter Four. Maguire’s work on defining tragicomedy as purely and essentially a court product suggests that only the court authors were positioned to produce this kind of drama. I agree that Charles II did not address his people in print, but used his enthusiastic courtiers to do so. Therefore Suckling, Killigrew, Davenant, Orrery and the Howards produced poems and plays which celebrated the restored monarchy.

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<sup>78</sup> Edward Burns, *Restoration Comedy: Crises of Desire and Identity* (London: Macmillan Press, 1987).

### **John Fletcher – the first “cross-over” playwright**

A brief consideration of one of Fletcher’s plays illustrates his ability to “cross over”, and also demonstrates the technique of “cross-over” as it will be applied throughout my thesis. Ben Jonson, William Shakespeare, Richard Brome, James Shirley, Thomas Jordan, Sir William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew all made the “cross-over” from Charles I’s reign to that of Charles II. But John Fletcher, who collaborated with and succeeded Shakespeare as writer for the King’s Men in 1616, has best claim to the title of the “first cross-over playwright”, in its literal definition. During the governmental ban on theatrical performances, when plays continued to be staged illicitly, three plays are recorded as having been performed in London. All are attributed to Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher: a tragicomedy, *A King and No King*; a tragedy, *The Bloody Brother*; and a comedy, *Wit without Money*, are recorded as having been performed in 1647, 1648 and 1654 respectively - although it is likely that they received more than one performance.<sup>79</sup> As a result, Fletcher probably represented to the Restoration the sense of literary continuity and inheritance which William Davenant was to define and develop in the early years of the Restoration, and which I discuss in Chapter Three. As co-writer with Davenant’s godfather, Shakespeare, and subsequently one half of the highly popular Beaumont and Fletcher partnership, Fletcher provided a close link with the past which Charles II and his courtiers recalled –

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<sup>79</sup> Hotson, pp. 40, 55 and 261. Thomas Killigrew’s tragicomedy *Claricilla* was acted in 1652 (Hotson, pp. 26, 49-50), while James Shirley saw his plays acted by the exiled Royalists in Dublin during the 1650s. These performances were geographically removed from the conflict, however, and it was Fletcher’s plays for which the Royalist actors in London chose to risk their livelihoods.

and then rewrote. His work had a resonance which few other poets of the time could match; his comedies deal with inheritance, war, loss and gain which would perhaps have had a particular interest for the Restoration post-war audience. With their depiction of marital warfare and the battle of the sexes, moreover, Fletcher's comedies are especially relevant in a society dealing with the issues arising from a newly empowered female population.

*The Maid in the Mill*, by Fletcher (with possible collaboration from William Rowley), was originally performed in 1623 at the court of Charles I. It is one of the first comedies to be performed on the newly restored stage, perhaps the very first. It was performed not only by John Rhodes's company during the 1659-1660 season, but also by Killigrew's King's Company in 1660, when it enjoyed a moderate but certain success second time around. The plot, set in Spain, recalls Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in its depiction of the growing love of Antonio and Ismenia, whose families are at war. Alongside runs the sub-plot of the abduction of Florimell, the simple 'Maid in the Mill', by the aristocratic Count Otrante, who learns, through his admiration of her steadfast purity, to respect and value the virtue of the lower classes. Fletcher emphasises the sense of distance between rich and poor, and particularly the sense of distance between a king and his subjects.

In Act 3 the miller Franio mistakes the French tailor Vertigo for King Philippo. "Vertigo" is a term linked with height, and a fear of heights, but Franio also assumes that, by virtue of his rank and authority, the king must necessarily be the tallest man he has ever seen. As a tailor, Vertigo advertises his skill in the clothes he wears, and as a French tailor, he wears fine French silks. Franio, who

has never seen the King, assumes that a tall man in gold silks must be the monarch. This visual joke, which works as a covert joke against Charles I's low stature, is reinterpreted in the revival of the play, as Charles II was unusually tall in comparison to his father and paternal grandfather.<sup>80</sup> The King himself enters to find the miller bowing to the tailor in the mistaken belief that he is saluting his monarch. Once the mistake has been pointed out, King Philipppo remarks with amusement:

*Philipppo:* So foolishly  
You have golden business sure; because I am homely  
Clad, in no glittering suit, I am not look'd on:<sup>81</sup>

Initially this episode can be read as a criticism of the remoteness of Charles I from his people; Franio has no idea what the king looks like. Also, Fletcher is questioning the idea that true majesty has to be portrayed by spectacle and splendour, for Franio's assumption that the man in the most spectacular costume must be the king is shown to be completely mistaken. In the contrast between *Vertigo's* empty glory, revealed to be a sham, and Philipppo's true kingship, Fletcher suggests a more effective way in which a king might rule his subjects. Philipppo consolidates his moral high ground by concluding, "Let my Court have rich souls, their suits I weigh not:" (3.2.109). This viewpoint appears

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<sup>80</sup> Charles II has been estimated at being about 6' 2" tall, in comparison with James I and Charles I who were 5' 9" and 5' 3" respectively. It was generally believed that Charles II inherited his dark colouring (his mother referred to him as "the Black Boy") from his grandparents on Henrietta Maria's side, Henry IV of France and his wife Marie de Medici; and his height from his Danish grandmother on Charles I's side, Anna of Denmark, James I's queen.

<sup>81</sup> John Fletcher (and William Rowley?), *The Maid in the Mill*, in *The Dramatic Works of Beaumont and Fletcher*, general ed Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966 - 1996), ix, 3.2.100-102. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

to have been adopted by the new (tall) king, Charles II, who had lived in poverty during his exile and now made a point of showing little concern for the rich trappings which accompanied his Restoration, preferring to emphasise his accessibility to the people.<sup>82</sup> Thus this episode, when performed on the Restoration stage, serves as an endorsement of the new king's style of ruling. What begins as criticism "crosses over" to function as praise. It is the way in which the techniques of "cross-over" enable this kind of reinterpretation and refashioning of meaning which forms the basic argument of this thesis, and which I will be exploring in subsequent chapters.

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In Chapter One I examine the way in which "cross-over" operates across reigns, considering the implicit critique of Charles I's reign offered by the restaging of Thomas Middleton's *Michaelmas Term* (1607). I look at the huge importance which land and the possession of land held in the early seventeenth century, and how the same themes were retreated by the choice of certain comedies for restaging in the 1660s. I also consider the emphasis placed on dispossession and

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<sup>82</sup> Charles's compassion and sympathy for his subjects, and his approachability, was recorded by them with gratitude and warmth. Not only did the King attend the playhouses sitting amongst his subjects, but he frequently walked in St James' Park, engaging in conversation with any confident enough to approach him. His "hands-on" approach was demonstrated particularly in the Great Fire in 1666, when he and the Duke of York went out into the streets to encourage and help their suffering subjects. John Evelyn recalls:

It is not indeede imaginable how extraordinary the vigilanc<e> & activity of the King & Duke was, even labouring in person, & being present, to command, Order, reward, and encourage Workemen; by which he shewed his affection to his people, & gained theirs. (Evelyn, p. 173)

sequestration by certain authors writing in the 1650s, and how these authors indicate the development of Restoration comedy.

Chapter Two focuses on two “cross-over” comedies and the revisions which were implemented by the authors in order to appeal to a new, Restoration, audience. The first, Abraham Cowley’s *Cutter of Coleman Street* (1663), is a reworking of his earlier comedy *The Guardian* (1650), both performed in front of Prince Charles, later Charles II. The second is a famously popular “cross-over” comedy by the King’s favourite, his theatre manager Thomas Killigrew’s *The Parson’s Wedding* (licensed 1641, published 1664). Killigrew has until now received less critical attention than Davenant, partly because he has been cast in his rival’s shadow, despite the attempts of Alfred Harbage, and most recently William T Reich in his edition of *Claricilla*, to reinstate him as a key author.<sup>83</sup> Although Killigrew’s company enjoyed all the advantages of the experienced actors and actresses, and a monopoly on the repertory, his contribution to Caroline and Restoration comedy has been largely overlooked. However, *The Parson’s Wedding* shows Killigrew developing a more sophisticated account of traditional and new forms of the actor - author - audience relationship, and Chapter Two repositions him as a more significant author of seventeenth-century English comedy than has so far been acknowledged. Chapter Three goes on to

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<sup>83</sup> Alfred Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew: Cavalier Dramatist, 1612–83* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930). William T Reich argues that Killigrew was not just a bawdy rake who dabbled in playmaking, but had a “deep interest in the improvement of the stage.” *Claricilla, by Thomas Killigrew: a Critical Edition*, ed. William T. Reich (New York: Garland Press, 1980), p.2. A collection of essays on Thomas Killigrew, edited by Philip Major with the working title *Thomas Killigrew and the English Stage: New Perspectives* is in preparation for publication by Ashgate Press in 2013, and will include my essay on ‘Tradition and Innovation in *The Parson’s Wedding*’.

acknowledge Davenant's huge influence on the revival and development of the theatre, and discuss how he adapts Shakespeare for the Restoration stage, as well as reviving his own original comedies.

Davenant and Killigrew used their sense of what was popular with post-war audiences whose social makeup was different from that of their Caroline predecessors. In my view, underlying the separation between page and stage identified by Susan Wiseman and Sandra Clark, is the construction by Davenant and Dryden of a definite sense of literary inheritance passed from Jonson and his contemporaries to Davenant and his contemporaries, which culminates in Dryden's validation of the whole process of literary inheritance in the prefaces and epilogues to his plays.<sup>84</sup> Dryden was concentrating on a critical inheritance; I would suggest that Davenant was looking more specifically at the inheritance of dramatic and theatrical writing and in Chapter Three I show how, in *The Wits* (1636/1661) he identifies the concept of Wit as both a characteristic and a character, part of this dramatic / theatrical inheritance,. Subsequently John Wilson overturns this definition of 'a Wit' in his negative portrait of *The Cheats* (1663). Darryll Grantley has discussed the crystalisation of Wit as a key asset in the Caroline dramas, and the increased emphasis on the country - city divide as a

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<sup>84</sup> For example, Marcie Frank has commented, 'The imbrication of inheritance, transmission and improvement with criticism itself is most visible in Dryden's epilogue to the *Conquest of Granada, Part II*, in which he criticizes his Jacobean forebears for failing to transmit "their fame" to their literary heirs. By pointing out that they have "kept [their fame] by being dead," however, Dryden establishes critical discourse as the vehicle through which literary fame is transmitted [....] Indeed, for Dryden, criticism restores literary inheritance.' Marcie Frank, *Gender, Theatre, and the Origins of Criticism: from Dryden to Manley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 7

result.<sup>85</sup> Nicholas McDowell has argued that Wit was appropriated by the Royalists as a weapon against the Puritans, but that in the aftermath of the civil war, writers looked back and sought to preserve the civilised values of Jonsonian literary culture.<sup>86</sup> Robert Markley and Laurie Finke have discussed Wit as a form of social gamesmanship, a method and an end.<sup>87</sup> I argue that the development of the ‘comedy of Wits’ reflects the situation offstage in real life, where the loss of property and place meant that people relied on their wits for survival. Wit could signal a means to financial solvency, and political influence – the more significant for being viewed as an isolated quality, apart from any material wealth.

The need to plot a dramatic inheritance alongside the question of real inheritance and restitution is – as I show in Chapter Three – part of the Restoration psyche. For Michael Cordner and Peter Holland, one of the most productive ways forward for Restoration history may be to look backwards with renewed curiosity and vitality of purpose.<sup>88</sup> Whereas Jonson and Shakespeare were happy to acknowledge classical and medieval source material, the demoralization of those who survived the war and the Protectorate could only be reversed by a collective tracing of ancestry going back a couple of generations.

In Chapter Four, I look at the “cross-over” of one text, John Tatham’s *The Rump* (1660), as it is reworked and restated by Aphra Behn in her comedy *The*

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<sup>85</sup> Darryll Grantley, *London in Early Modern English Drama: Representing the Built Environment* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

<sup>86</sup> Nicholas McDowell, *Poetry and Allegiance in the English Civil Wars: Marvell and the Cause of Wit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>87</sup> In their collection of essays on Beaumont and Fletcher, *From Renaissance to Restoration: Metamorphoses of the Drama*, ed. by Robert Markley and Laurie Finke, (Cleveland: Bellflower Press and Case Western Reserve University, 1984).

<sup>88</sup> *Players, Playwrights, Playhouses: Investigating Performance, 1660 – 1800* eds Michael Cordner and Peter Holland (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).



*Roundheads* (1682). “Cross-over” here is applied in a different way, in that both Tatham and Behn were writing in support of the monarchy, Tatham’s comedy emphatically attacks the Cromwellian regime and the chaos which followed the death of the Lord Protector, whereas Behn rewrites the source text to remind audiences of the chaos and to encourage them to draw a more positive comparison with Charles II’s reign. Her subtle changes illustrate the way in which “cross-over” functions as far more than a revival of existing material; as a transformative process which results in significant changes in text or performance.

In terms of dramatic literary development, perhaps the most influential of the “cross-over” comedies is *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon* (licensed 1641, published 1657) by Thomas Jordan. In Chapter Four I show how this comedy not only looks back to the traditions of pre-war Caroline drama, but also epitomizes the “wit comedy” traditionally ascribed to the Restoration comedies of manners, while looking forward to the jail musicals of the early eighteenth century made popular by John Gay and *The Beggar’s Opera* (1728). Jordan is a seriously underrated author, and I argue that he, more than any of the other “cross-over” authors, stood with one foot in the pre-war period and the other in the post-Restoration, succeeding in bridging the gap between centuries and between genres.

The conclusion to my thesis argues that the choice of certain plays (and not others) for revival and restaging in the first decade of the Restoration is significant in that they are offered for reinterpretation to new audiences living under a different monarch, in a post-war and post-republican society. This has implications for the reception of a text, in particular from a performance theory

and theatre history viewpoint. Authors made considered choices in developing the drama; the emergence of Restoration 'wit comedy' abandons the philosophical considerations underpinning Renaissance comedy, and tones down the spectacle and theatrical effect of masque and opera. As the survivors of sequestration had to live on their wits, so Restoration comedy equips itself with the tools of puns and humorous word-play. I question whether the deliberate artificiality of Restoration comedy represents the climax of an achievement, the implementation of Charles II's theatrical manifesto. Against this background of artificiality, a literary and theatrical inheritance is created by contemporaries, embedding a sense of "cross-over" from the reign of Charles I to the reign of Charles II.

## Chapter One: Contextualising and conceptualising inheritance

My study of the “cross-over” comedies commences by looking at a key theme developed in early seventeenth-century literature: the importance of land and property, and the way in which the sequestration of property and the subsequent loss of inheritance anticipates the creation of a new kind of inheritance, one which is specifically literary. “Cross-over” comedy creates an empathic relationship with the audience, and also helps to define a new kind of literary history. In this chapter I will show how land becomes a sexualised object of desire in Thomas Middleton’s *Michaelmas Term* (1607); how questions of inheritance, abandoning one’s birthright and reclaiming it again have serious consequences for landowners in John Fletcher’s *Wit Without Money* (1639) and Richard Brome’s *A Jovial Crew* (1652); and how the sequestration of land causes bitterness, fracture and destabilisation in Robert Howard’s *The Committee* (1665). Although not all the comedies considered “cross over” from the reign of Charles I to that of Charles II, Middleton’s *Michaelmas Term* lays the foundation for the establishment of inheritance which underpins the “cross-over” comedies, while Howard’s *The Committee* consolidates the discussion of deprivation of material inheritance and the need to find a new method of survival. These plays deal – from different perspectives – with the theme of land ownership, revealing important insights into how this question might have appealed to different audiences on both sides of the divide.

As I have indicated in the previous chapter, the “cross-over” plays staged in the first season were not as uncompromisingly celebratory of the monarchy as

might be expected from the Restoration propagandists.<sup>89</sup> As Kevin Sharpe has argued, the comedies of Killigrew and Davenant, among others, may be read partly as protests to Charles I about his style of governance.<sup>90</sup> Middleton, Brome and Davenant depict the fear of losing property (the most tangible source of wealth) through taxation and sequestration. Perhaps nobody could have predicted the shocking conclusion which really did occur in 1642 when the King plunged the country into civil war and property was lost not only through taxation and sequestration but also through pillaging.<sup>91</sup> The revivals of the “cross-over” plays, and the first performances of those written during the Interregnum, serve to express this sense of post-war aftershock.

The Civil War was a conflict of class, politics and religion; the divisions were between friends, neighbours, and family members. The emphasis upon personal responsibilities to different causes was perhaps more significant at this time because the Royalist cause of itself demanded that its adherents give not only their lives for their King, but also their lands and money, abandoning their estates

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<sup>89</sup> ‘The Restoration may have been heralded with traditional panegyrics and signs. But, beneath the surface, people knew that the world was different and changed from that of the early Stuart years. The restored monarch did not face the challenge of establishing a new dynasty. He faced the greater challenge of re-establishing an old one after Cromwellian rule; still more difficult, of reconstituting monarchy after a decade of republic.’ Sharpe, *Image Wars*, p. 542.

<sup>90</sup> Sharpe has described Charles I as tolerating freedom of speech which enabled Suckling, Killigrew and Davenant to air specific political positions and criticism in their court plays. Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment*, p. 39.

<sup>91</sup> Amongst others Margaret Lucas, later Margaret Cavendish, had her family lands and later her house plundered by angry Colchester parliamentarians. Katie Whitaker, *Mad Madge: Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, Royalist, Writer and Romantic* (New York: Basic Books, 2002, repr. London: Chatto & Windus, 2003), Chapter 3: “The Coming of War, 1642”, pp. 34-46. Future references to this source will be given as the author’s name followed by the page reference.

to follow him round the country.<sup>92</sup> The Royalist landowner was therefore absent from his estate, whilst, by contrast, the Parliamentary landowner was able to build up a strong power-base within the community. The traditional assumptions of inheritance, with the passing down of property, land and money from father to elder son, and the responsibility of that son to provide for the rest of the family, could no longer be depended upon once the Civil War broke out.<sup>93</sup> Estates were seized through sequestration or by enemy forces, and land ownership was no longer respected, but became a 'free for all'.<sup>94</sup> This raised questions about inheritance and a challenge to the rules of primogeniture; furthermore, the emerging role of the heiress acquired greater significance, as women played an increasingly important role in the control and management of property which remained. Ann Hughes and Julie Sanders have commented:

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<sup>92</sup> Clive Holmes has argued that the distinct difference between royalist and parliamentary perceptions of loyalties contributed significantly to the outcome of the war. Clive Holmes, 'The country community in Stuart historiography' in *The English Civil War* ed. by Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (London: Arnold Press, 1997), pp. 213-232. Ann Hughes has also commented that 'parliament was more successful in the civil war not because it was more 'tyrannical', but because it integrated its war effort more effectively with local concerns.' (p.16) Future references to this source will be given as the authors' names followed by the page reference.

<sup>93</sup> Wendy Griswold has commented on the increasingly strict primogeniture in England during the sixteenth century, with the elder brother inheriting all the lands, while the younger had to fend for himself. (Griswold, p. 49)

<sup>94</sup> Sequestration involved an assessment and parliamentary levy being made on a person's material possessions, and, in particular, land. Refusal to pay would result in arrest, and in some cases imprisonment. At first Royalists and Parliamentarians alike were assessed, but, as the war continued, the Royalists were penalized more heavily than the parliamentary land owners as Ann Hughes notes in her essay 'The king, the parliament and the localities during the English Civil War.' (Cust and Hughes, pp 261- 287.) Royalists returning to their estates often found that they had been seized by the sequestrators themselves. The real frustration and bitterness against sequestration arose less from the initial seizure - having one's lands sequestered did not automatically mean that they were gone forever - but from the length of time it took to restore lands to their rightful heirs.

Women, younger brothers and other ‘dependents’ took major responsibility for the lobbying and compromises through which exile and defiance was underwritten. In most families the prominence of a normally subordinate figure was necessary, and tactical but it had inevitable consequences for the authority of elder brothers, husbands and fathers.<sup>95</sup>

During the Commonwealth, sequestration of estates often meant depriving female, as well as male, heirs of their birthright. It was the women who maintained and defended the land in the Civil War while the men were away fighting, and in a society decimated by war, there was a significant increase in the female heirs to property. This had an impact upon contemporary drama: as the “cross-over” comedies move from depicting father/son conflict towards brother/brother warfare, the new comedies, written in the 1650s and staged in the early 1660s offer a more proactive heroine, empowered by her inheritance as well as by her wit.<sup>96</sup> But, as Janet Clare has commented, a formerly patriarchal society found this difficult to tolerate: “The image of the all-licensed female was likely to cause hostile reaction in the press [...] there is, in the carnivalesque image of breeches slung from a pole, the gleeful suggestion that the Commonwealth has produced subversion it cannot contain.” (Clare, p.17)

In the seventeenth century, land was hugely significant as a definition of self and status. Brian Manning has argued that the tensions between gentry and tenants (both royalist and parliamentary) were based partly upon the desire of

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<sup>95</sup> Ann Hughes and Julie Sanders, ‘Disruptions and Evocations of Family Amongst Royalist Exiles’ in *Literatures of Exile in the English Revolution and its Aftermath, 1640-1690*, ed. by Philip Major, (Ashgate, 2010), pp. 62-63.

<sup>96</sup> For example, Ruth, the heroine of Sir Robert Howard’s *The Committee* (1665), who wins back her inheritance after it is unjustly seized by her uncle and aunt the Days. Because she is rich, her suitor Colonel Careless (with unusual gallantry) feels unable to declare his love, and she must use her wit to woo and win him. The name Ruth recalls the Biblical heroine who was a dispossessed alien and this is relevant to the dispossessed Royalist aliens of the English republic.

the yeomanry to prosper and to claim the land for themselves, which they were forced to farm on behalf of an often absent aristocratic landlord. Increasingly this had a negative impact on the peasantry and labourers, who were placed under pressure by the frustrated and acquisitive yeomen.<sup>97</sup> Kevin Sharpe has noted that ‘In the counties both the experience of war and greater Council interference in local affairs were unwelcome. Whilst the king and Council were often frustrated at the tardiness of local officials in implementing government orders, the provinces felt acutely the imposition of novel, expensive and disruptive burdens – burdens that strained local relationships and divided local communities.’<sup>98</sup> These tensions underpin the discussion of land and inheritance in the “cross-over” comedies.

### ***Michaelmas Term***

Thomas Middleton’s *Michaelmas Term*, in its first performance in 1605/6 and subsequent printing in 1607, functions as a critique of encroaching Royalty who seize common land, opposed by the yeomanry who protect what they believe to be morally theirs. Its reprinting in 1630 clearly illustrates the effect of a “cross-over” in that it has direct relevance to contemporary concerns about the indifference of

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<sup>97</sup> “the elite of the middle sort became more alarmed and more concerned to discipline the poor, extend and intensify the exploitation of wage-labour, and increase production, rather than to end the rule of the aristocracy and gentry.” Brian Manning, *The English People and the English Revolution 1640-1649* (London: Heinemann, 1976, repr. London, Chicago & Melbourne: Bookmarks, 1991), p. 47.

<sup>98</sup> Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 34. Future references to this source will be given as the author’s name and short title followed by the page reference.

the Royalist landowner, and how land could get into the wrong hands as a result of careless management. As an implicit critique of Charles I's governance, it is highly significant.

Throughout the play, Middleton counterbalances sex and material possessions, describing one in terms of the other. The wool-draper Quomodo schemes to get hold of a parcel of land belonging to the young gentleman Easy. His desire is encouraged by his associate, Shortyard (aptly named both in terms of lack of land and length of penis), who assumes Quomodo must have been looking for sexual adventures in the country:

*Quomodo:* My journey was toward Essex<sup>99</sup>

*Shortyard:* Most true.

*Quomodo:* Where I have seen what I desire.

*Shortyard:* A woman?

*Quomodo:* Puh, a woman! Yet beneath her,  
That which she often treads on, yet commands her --  
Land, fair neat land.<sup>100</sup>

In Quomodo's fantasy, the woman both treads on the land as its owner, yet is also commanded by it because she needs the personal wealth, financial security and identity which it offers. In Act 2, he expresses his desire for land as others might yearn for a beautiful woman:

*Quomodo:* O that sweet, neat, comely, proper, delicate, parcel of land, like  
a fine gentlewoman i'th'waist, not so great as pretty, pretty;

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<sup>99</sup> The term "Essex girl", with its derogatory implications of ignorance and foolishness, is familiar to modern readers. In the seventeenth century, the adjective "Essex" also implied a sense of difference or strangeness; the *Oxford English Dictionary* records the term "Essex bulls" as being "unlike any other animals". Quomodo probably targets Essex as a good source of profit, whose inhabitants can easily be gulled and manipulated.

<sup>100</sup> Thomas Middleton, *Michaelmas Term* in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, gen.eds Gary Taylor, John Lavagnino and John Jowett (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007; repr. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2010), 1.2.102-105 (p. 340). Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.



the trees in summer whistling, the silver waters by the banks  
harmoniously gliding. (2.3.91-94)

This confusion of women and land objectifies women as the comedy depicts the struggle between Quomodo and Easy to gain possession of the other's "property". Easy falls in love with Thomasine, Quomodo's wife, while Quomodo falls in love with Easy's land. Middleton develops a specific comparison between the desires of two classes, and uses that comparison to illustrate the divisions between them. The gentry desire sex, the middle class desire property; both are obsessed with their objects of desire. As Gail Kern Paster comments, 'the play strives for a balanced portrayal of the ferocious class conflict and urban competition which it satirically constructs as social reality.'<sup>101</sup> So Quomodo and his merchant class dismiss the gentry as sexually promiscuous and careless of marital laws, counterbalancing this with their own for property.

Quomodo embroiders upon his plot against Easy:

*Shortyard:* What is the mark you shoot at?

*Quomodo:* Why, the fairest to cleave the heir in twain;

I mean his title: to murder his estate,

Stifle his right in some detested prison:

There are means and ways enough to hook in gentry,

Besides our deadly enmity, which thus stands,

They're busy 'bout our wives, we 'bout their lands.

*Shortyard:* Your revenge is more glorious:

To be a cuckold is but for one life,

When land remains to you, your heir, or wife. (1.2.106-115)

The most likely ('fairest') way to 'cleave [Easy] in twain' is to 'murder his estate / Stifle his right'. The startling use of 'cleave', with its violent implications,

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<sup>101</sup> Thomas Middleton, *Michaelmas Term*, ed. by Gail Kern Paster, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 16. Future references to this source will be given as the editor's name followed by the page reference.

and the subsequent image of suffocation in “some detested prison”, is a strong indication of the enmity which Quomodo feels for the young man he has barely met. Interestingly, as soon as Quomodo gains the land, at the very moment when Easy makes it over to him, his references to it become prosaic and practical. Once he has gained the prize, he falls out of love with it and seeks its destruction:

*Quomodo: [aside]:* Now I begin to set one foot upon the land. Methinks I am felling of trees already; we shall have some Essex logs yet to keep Christmas with, and that's a comfort. (2.3.374-377)

Easy also confuses people and objects; later in the scene, when Quomodo and Shortyard insist upon the legal procedures of having a citizen to witness Easy's signature to the bonds which they have presented to him, Easy offers insouciantly to ‘send down for a tenant or two’ (2.3.293). Just as Middleton's deliberate confusion of land and wife depicts women as possessions, so he depicts the tenants as part of the landowner's goods and chattels.

Thomasine, watching Easy signing away his land, likens this act to a particularly grisly death:

*Thomasine: [aside]* Now is he quart'ring out; the executioner  
Strides over him; with his own blood he writes.  
I am no dame that can endure such sights.  
*Exit [above]* (2.3.378-380)

It would be a more usual figure of speech to find the executioner standing rather than striding over Easy, but Middleton is again emphasising the close links between man and land. Quomodo not only quarters out the actual land, but strides over Easy as if he were himself the land. However, this man-land also possesses human features; quartered out, to the pitying Thomasine, Easy bleeds enough to write with his own blood.

Critics have noted the resemblance between Quomodo and Volpone (although Gail Kern Paster questions whether Jonson came before Middleton or the other way around), but have not commented on the resemblance between Quomodo and Shakespeare's Malvolio.<sup>102</sup> When he tricks Easy out of his land, Quomodo fantasises about his future as a man of property:

*Quomodo:* Now shall I be divulg'd a landed man  
Throughout the livery: one points, another whispers,  
A third frets inwardly, let him fret and hang! (3.4.5-7)

The steward Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* (produced 1602, published 1623) similarly fantasises about the life he would enjoy were he to marry Olivia and become head of the household.<sup>103</sup> But whereas marriage would facilitate this rise for Malvolio, Quomodo would risk his marriage in order to gain Easy's property:

Now come my golden days in. - Whither is the worshipful

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<sup>102</sup> Gail Kern Paster's edition of the play notes echoes of Sir Toby Belch's advice to Sir Andrew Aguecheek, but does not mention the textual similarities between the speeches of Malvolio and Quomodo which I identify here.

<sup>103</sup> Malvolio's fantasy about marrying Olivia in *Twelfth Night*, overheard by her increasingly furious uncle Sir Toby Belch, is in similar vein:

*Malvolio:* Having been three months married to her, sitting in my state -

*Sir Toby:* O for a stone-bow to hit him in the eye!

*Malvolio:* Calling my officers about me, in my branched velvet gown, having come from a day-bed, where I have left Olivia sleeping.....

*Sir Toby:* Fire and brimstone!

*Fabian:* O, peace, peace.

*Malvolio:* And then to have the humour of state: and after a demure travel of regard, telling them I know my place, as I would they should do theirs, to ask for my kinsman Toby,

*Sir Toby:* Bolts and shackles!

*Malvolio:* Seven of my people, with an obedient start, make out for him. I frown the while; and perchance wind up my watch, or play with my - (*touching his chain*) some rich jewel. Toby approaches; curtsies there to me ---

*Sir Toby:* Shall this fellow live?

William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, in *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, gen eds Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2005), 2.5, 42-61.

Master Quomodo and his fair bedfellow rid forth? - To his land in Essex. Whence comes those goodly loads of logs? - From his land in Essex. Where grows this pleasant fruit, says one citizen's wife in the Row. At Master Quomodo's orchard in Essex. O, O, does it so? I thank you for that good news i' faith. (3.4.12-19)

Malvolio fantasises about his status as a count, and also the possession of Olivia which is implicitly attached to this status. Quomodo and Easy each possess part of Malvolio's aspirations, but strongly desire the part which they do not have; Easy gives up his land, but yearns to possess Thomasina; Quomodo is careless of his wife, but is obsessed by a desire for the land. For Quomodo, it is essential that he is defined not only by his own knowledge that he possesses the land, but also by the show of this possession to others, by external signs such as his servants' livery and the selling of his fruit and logs. As a merchant, his existence revolves around buying and selling; he finds his home not in the seclusion of the estate he has stolen, but in the public square where he can parade his newly acquired wealth to his business acquaintances.

With this new property comes the burden and anxiety of retaining it, and a new issue - finding a suitable heir who can be entrusted with the future responsibility of its retention and management. Quomodo, overhearing his son plotting with Shortyard to cheat him out of his lands, furiously declares:

*Quomodo:* [aside] He shall be speedily disinherited; he gets not a foot, not the crown of a molehill. I'll sooner make a courtier my heir, for teaching my wife tricks, than thee. My most neglectful son!  
(4.4.48-51)

Quomodo would even make the land over to the courtier race he despises, rather than reward his disloyal son; the sense of inheritance passing down through the family is as strong in the new mercantile middle class as in the ancient

aristocracy. For Quomodo, successful property accumulation depends on cleverness and hard work, in contrast to the aristocratic assumption of inheritance by the eldest son, no matter how profligate he may be. Even when he makes false gains, this apparently unprincipled tradesman owner can have a principled view of what is 'proper'. However, when he is himself tricked into signing his lands away, Quomodo disintegrates emotionally; they have become so much a part of him that his sanity is threatened by their loss:

*Quomodo*: He does devise all means to make me mad,  
That I may no more lie with my wife  
In perfect memory. I know't; but yet  
The lands will maintain me in my wits;  
The land will do so much for me. (5.3.64-68)

Easy and Quomodo are polar opposites. Middleton shows them both to be too extreme in their behaviour and therefore both imperfect landowners. Easy is initially deprived of his lands because he does not appreciate them, and is careless of their worth, but Middleton also questions Quomodo's obsessive attitude towards property-owning, depicting it as similar to the monopoly held by the greedy aristocracy. As Gail Kern Paster has remarked, 'each of the objects of desire is thought to hold the key to self-transformation; each is exposed, at the end of the play, as illusory.' (Kern Paster, p.17) When he learns to take responsibility, Easy regains his lands and (temporarily) another reward in Quomodo's wife, while Quomodo is humiliated for overreaching himself. Ultimately Middleton restores the status quo, although he criticises those who abuse the hierarchy.<sup>104</sup> It

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<sup>104</sup> Mathew Martin has suggested, 'Easy succeeds because he behaves as the typical amoral gallant into which he has been fashioned, seizing and exploiting the opportunities that present themselves.' Matthew Martin, "'[B]egot between tirewomen and tailors"; Commodified Self-Fashioning in *Michaelmas Term*', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 5.1. (1999) 2.1 - 36 (p19). However Eric Leonidas

is not what you have, but what you know, which forms the toolkit of survival, a key concern of the early seventeenth-century dramatists.

*Michaelmas Term* is driven by the tensions between the classes, and this must have been particularly clear to audiences who encountered the play after its reprinting in 1630. Middleton shows the landed gentry as neglectful and contemptuous of the lands and tenants they were supposed to be nurturing, thus laying the foundations for the discussion of land and its importance in mid seventeenth-century comedy. Other plays written and performed at around the same time, such as John Fletcher's *Wit Without Money* (1639), depict landlords who want to abdicate the responsibility of their lands, and who find their tenants burdensome.

### ***Wit without Money***

Originally printed in 1639, and reprinted in 1661, *Wit Without Money* is a play which has resonance both for the uneasy 1630s and the post-war 1660s, as Fletcher discusses the way in which a landowner's single selfish action affects not only his close family and friends, but also the wider 'family' network of his tenants and dependants. He depicts the conflict and tension between elder and younger brothers in the absence of the father figure; the younger brother in particular is forced to renegotiate the relationship with his elder, who now, rather

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has argued for a more proactive view: 'No matter one's status... economic passivity and social complacency are debilitating attitudes; the only recourse is to begin cultivating the practices and intellectual mindset of mercantilism.' Eric Leonidas, 'The School of the World: Trading on Wit in Middleton's *Trick to Catch the Old One*', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 12.3 (2007) 3.1 – 27 (p.1).

than merely standing in his way of an inheritance, might actually deprive him of it entirely. Fletcher warns that, if the father-king is absent, the warring factions of older parliamentarians may deprive younger monarchists of their birthright: their country.<sup>105</sup>

Valentine has rejected his responsibilities as head of the family, and as landlord, abandoning his extended family of tenants as well as his brother Francisco. The description in the *Dramatis Personae* summarises him as ‘a Gallant that will not bee perswaded to keep his estate.’<sup>106</sup> Valentine’s uncle and his friend the Merchant express opposition to this challenge to the established social order:

*Uncle:*     He cannot be brought now he has spent his owne,  
                  To thinke there’s inheritance, or meanes,  
                  But all a common riches, all men bound  
                  To be his Bailiffes.

*Merchant:* This is something dangerous. (I.1.8-11)

When pressed, Valentine rejects the assumptions that money is the only means of survival and wealth, arguing that he is using his wit to secure his livelihood. Valentine’s justification for his behaviour is a critique of contemporary corruption as he accuses his uncle and the Merchant of playing tricks on the gullible:

*Vallentine:* Are not these wayes as honest as persecuting  
                  The starved inheritance, with musty Corne,  
                  The very rats were faine to run away from,

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<sup>105</sup> The image of the father-king, seen as safeguarding the country, is described by Larry Carver in ‘The Restoration Poets and their Father King’, *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 40 (1977), 333-51.

<sup>106</sup> John Fletcher, *Wit Without Money*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler, in *The Dramatic Works of Beaumont and Fletcher*, general ed. Fredson Bowers, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966 - 1996), VI, p. 10. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

Or selling rotten wood by the pound, like spices,  
 Which Gentlemen doe after burn byth ounce?  
 Doe not I know your way, of feeding beasts,  
 With graines, and windy stuffe, to blow up butchers?  
 (I.1.203-209)

However, having presented a protagonist whose motives appear to be philanthropic and exemplary, Fletcher undermines Valentine's cause by showing the effects of his behaviour upon his family and dependants.

Interestingly the name 'Valentine' had acquired another meaning during the late sixteenth century, different from its more customary association with love tokens. The *Oxford English Dictionary* records it as 'a sealed letter from the Crown to landholders for the apprehension of persons offending against the law', and supplies examples of landowners being handed such 'valentines' to send to wrongdoers:

1556. In J.B. Paul *Accts Treasurer Scotland*, (1913) X, 318. 'For inbringin of certain persons gevin in valentyne to the arms of Elgin, Banf, and Abirdene.'  
 1561. *The Queen's Privy Council, Scotland*, I, 169. 'Thir personis Underwritten[...] in presence of the Quenis Grace ressavit thair valentinis of the names of the persons culpable of thift.'  
 1587. *Acts of the Scottish Parliament* (pub 1814) III, 464/2. 'The kings Maiesties clois valentyne to be sent to the Maisteris[...] baillies and chiftanes of all notable lymmeris and thevis.'<sup>107</sup>

With this definition in mind, Fletcher's Valentine can be seen to have placed himself in the position of a moral and legal arbiter, judging his friends and family in terms of how far they conform to the state laws, and how far they 'bend the rules'.. The association of the name 'Valentine' with a landowner and courtier may have had a still more specific meaning for the seventeenth-century audience.

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<sup>107</sup> *The Oxford English Dictionary Online*, entries 36, 39 and 42.  
 <<http://www.oed.com>> [accessed 27 July 2009]



In Nicholas Breton's tract *The Court and Country* (1618), the gentleman Valentine argues in favour of town and city life over the country idyll presented by his friend Vincent, and Fletcher refers scathingly to Breton's voluminous output in 3.4 of *Wit Without Money*.<sup>108</sup> Fletcher's choice of name, therefore, clearly identifies his protagonist as a town gentleman.

Valentine views his tenants as parasites, demanding more from his land as their families increase:

*Tennants:* We beseech you  
                     For our poor childrens sake.  
*Vallentine:* Who bid you get um?  
                     Have you not thrashing work enough, but children  
                     Must be bangd out o'th'sheafe too? (I.1.88-92)

Valentine's uncompromising attitude towards his tenants makes him appear unsympathetic and inhuman in the eyes of others; his uncle laments to the old retainer Lance that his nephew has gone mad. Lance, fiercely loyal to his former master, Valentine's father, berates the son for placing his inheritance as a gentleman in jeopardy, thereby condemning his family and servants to 'turn Tennants':

*Lance:* Nay if hee will be mad, Ile be mad  
                     With him, and tell him that Ile not spare him.  
                     His father kept good meate, good drinke, good fellowes,  
                     Good hawkes, good hounds, and bid his neighbours welcome:  
                     Kept him too, and supplied his prodigality,  
                     Yet kept his state still; must we turn Tennants now,  
                     After we have lived under the race of Gentry,  
                     And maintained good yeomanry, to some of the City,  
                     To a great should of Mutton, and a Custard,  
                     And have our state turned into Cabbage Gardens.

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<sup>108</sup> *Vallentine:* [---] who looked on you  
                     But piping kites that know you would be prises,  
                     And Prentices in *Paules* Church-yard, that sented  
                     Your want of *Brittanes* Bookes. (III.5.13-16)

Must it be so? (I.1.67-77)

Lance is angry at Valentine's failure to consider the feelings of his dependants, while Valentine's assumption of the moral high ground unconsciously reveals the stereotypically aristocratic contempt for the lower classes as uncivil, disorderly and dangerous:

*Valentine:* My tennants are no subjects, they obey nothing,  
And they are people too, never Christned,  
They know no law, not conscience, theile devour thee;  
(V.2.72-74)

Valentine's exaggerated description of the tenants as savages illustrates his remoteness and disinterest, but underlying this is a stronger lack of understanding and distrust. Like Easy, he sees them as possessions, and finds it difficult to accept their humanity; there is a contempt for their apparent lack of self-restraint, and almost a sense of fear of their potential to take over the land and therefore the landowner – 'theile devoure thee'.

Fletcher has presented an argument about the effects of irresponsibility and the far-reaching effects of inheritance, as Valentine rejects the 'normal' hierarchy and accepted social conventions. His deprivation of his brother's birthright anticipates the upheaval of the Civil War, when brother committed crimes against brother. In Chapter Three I shall return to this play to examine the significance of its argument for post-war Restoration society.

### ***A Jovial Crew***

*A Jovial Crew* is a "cross-over" comedy whose themes gain a different resonance in the 1640s and 1660s. First performed in 1641, it was published in 1652, and

was restaged in 1661, 1662 and 1669, and republished in 1661, 1684 and 1708. Brome's portrait of the community of 'merry beggars', his questioning of the behaviour of the established powers within society – the Church, the Law and the State – and his testing of the utopian belief system, which contemporaries were proposing as an alternative – seems to have been a compelling mix for Caroline and Restoration audiences.<sup>109</sup> Brome ultimately demonstrates the instability of the alternative society, showing how the cult of beggary, with its romantic or even quasi-religious status, is undercut by the behaviour of its practitioners. Essentially it is as transient as the more established ideologies, and only works positively through a limited life span. As Rosemary Gaby has noted, Brome 'shows us characters weakened by false anxieties and misled by romantic illusions who are eventually brought round to a healthier perspective.'<sup>110</sup> The sheltered gentlefolk in the play who leave their homes and opt for the apparently more romantic prospect of a life on the road do so in the belief that their adventure is only temporary, a chance for some excitement, to abdicate their social responsibilities, and to prove a point to their intransigent elders. Under the guidance and preaching of the morally ambivalent Springlove, they gain self-knowledge, and return to their homes as soon as the correct moment comes. This motif gains extra resonance

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<sup>109</sup> Utopianism, or the exploration of new belief systems, new worlds and new laws, was given impetus by the discovery of new lands such as Virginia and the Spanish colonies. Authors such as Francis Bacon and Joseph Hall discussed philosophical questions in *The Advancement of Learning* and *Mundus Alter et Idem*, while Shakespeare and Brome depicted various views of colonisation in *The Tempest* and *The Antipodes*. 'In the 1640s and 1650s utopian impulses came unleashed and an enthusiastic body of individuals began conceiving that they might refashion themselves and their nation in the image of their own ideal expectations.' Appelbaum, *Literature and Utopian Politics*, p. 172.

<sup>110</sup> Rosemary Gaby, 'Of Vagabonds and Commonwealths: Beggars' Bush, a Jovial Crew, and the Sisters' in *Studies in English Literature 1500- 1900*, 34.2 (1994), 409.

when performed in the playhouse before Charles II, the restored King, who returned from exile when *his* moment finally came.<sup>111</sup> However, although there is a sense that the characters have the potential for development and improvement via their voluntary sojourn in the countryside, there is little sense that this is actually effected; they have not learned to change from their challenging experiences in the country, but will return to the city as soon as they can to resume their old habits and way of life.<sup>112</sup> But Brome's exploration of themes of exile and lost inheritance, of conflict and reconciliation between parent and child, makes this play an obvious choice to restage in the post-Civil War Restoration theatre. Significantly, no major changes were made when the 1652 text (which, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, I am assuming was based on the text used in the 1641 performance) was reprinted in 1661, 1684 and 1708. These editions do not differ other than the insertion or substitution of a song.<sup>113</sup> Therefore the

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<sup>111</sup> Charles II made several foiled attempts to return. David Underdown has described the various failures of his supporters who remained in England to get him back again. It was only the death of Oliver Cromwell, the deposition of his weak son Richard, and the subsequent falling out between Parliament and the Army, with General Monck's decision to side with and recall the King, that enabled the Restoration to succeed. David Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracy in England 1649 – 1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960).

<sup>112</sup> Julie Sanders has argued that 'representations of this nature enabled dramatists to practise a particular kind of social investigation.' in 'Beggars' Commonwealths and the pre-Civil War stage: Suckling's *The Goblins*, Brome's *A Jovial Crew*, and Shirley's *The Sisters*' in *Modern Language Review*, 97.1 (2002), 1 – 14 (p.1).

<sup>113</sup> In the 1684 reprinting of the play, the beggar Poet, here named Scribble, sings a song in 4.2, 'There was a jovial Beggar'. In the 1708 version, the song 'Come come away' sung by the beggars to Springlove in Act 1, is replaced by a song 'Courtiers, Courtiers, think it no Scorn, / That silly poor Swains in Love should be'. 'There was a jovial Beggar' is sung by the Poet, Hilliard, Rachel, Meriel, Vincent and Springlove, each taking a solo verse. The dance which follows this song in the 1684 text now comes before it, and another dance now follows. The emphasis is on song and dance, which is in keeping with the emerging genre of

play which Charles II saw may have been very similar to that seen by pre-Commonwealth audiences, but its interpretation must have been affected by hindsight. The implicit messages to Charles I's court – to return to their neglected estates, to put their houses in order, and strengthen support for the monarchy in the final pre-war months – were restaged in front of his son and the new Restoration court who bore witness to the fact that the neglect of their lands and tenancies had brought disaster to the Carolean aristocracy.<sup>114</sup> Elizabeth Schafer has suggested that 'in 1661, when the English court had just *returned* from begging' the line 'The court goes a-begging, I think' might have seemed less provocative than it did to the Caroline court."<sup>115</sup> More generally, I would suggest, the play's themes of escape from restriction, of disguise and deception, of repentance and restoration would have appealed in a different way to the Restoration monarch and his audience. For this reason, considering *A Jovial Crew* as an example of "cross-over" comedy raises important new questions. Brome's comedy exposes and strongly attacks the hypocrisy and shallowness of seventeenth-century religious conflicts, and he employs overtly Christian imagery in his discussion of what constitutes genuine love of humanity as opposed to a show of philanthropy for the philanthropist's sake. He criticises the Puritans and their gullible followers, showing how alarmingly quickly a new cult can be

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the eighteenth-century musical, epitomised by John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728).

<sup>114</sup> Matthew Steggle has read *A Jovial Crew* as an endorsement of Charles I's instruction to his courtiers to return to managing their neglected estates in 'Redating *A Jovial Crew*', *Review of English Studies*, 53.211 (2002), 365-73.

<sup>115</sup> Elizabeth Schafer, 'Towards a Stage History of *A Jovial Crew*' in *A Jovial Crew: Richard Brome Online*, eds. Eleanor Lowe, Helen Ostovich and Richard Cave (2010), 29.

<<http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/brome/frame.html>> [accessed 27 July 2012]

invented and promoted, and how swiftly it can attract unsophisticated adherents.<sup>116</sup> Here beggary has a charismatic prophet (Patrico), and a convincing evangelist (Springlove). Brome shows clearly the overwhelming power of responding emotionally to an ideology, and how dangerous that emotion can be if unchecked. Brome implicitly passes moral judgement on his characters, as is seen in the strongly Christian imagery surrounding Springlove the Prodigal Son, and Oldrents the flawed philanthropist. In the pious romantic court of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, moral and philosophical discourse was welcomed. The more worldly Charles II and the Restoration audience may have responded more cynically to the themes of love and loss, destitution and restoration.

Springlove was rescued by Oldrents from his life as a beggar, but (like Shakespeare's Caliban in *The Tempest*) no amount of education and improvement can change his underlying nature:

*Springlove*: [...] I  
 Have fought with my Affections, by th'assistance  
 Of all the strengths of Art and Discipline  
 (All which I owe him for in education too)  
 To conquer and establish my observance  
 (As in all other rules) to him in this,  
 This inborn strong desire of liberty  
 In that free course, which he detests as shameful,  
 And I approve my earths felicity:  
 But finde the war is endless, and must fly.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> A similar example is found in Abraham Cowley's portrait of the Fifth Monarchists in *Cutter of Coleman Street* (1663). In Act 4, Cutter convinces the young Puritan Tabytha to marry him by pretending to be an avid Fifth Monarchist. Cowley satirises the gullibility and ignorance of the Puritans, inventing increasingly outrageous visions by Cutter / 'Abednego' to prove his genuine conviction and faith.

<sup>117</sup> Richard Brome, *A Jovial Crew*, in *A Jovial Crew: Richard Brome Online*, eds. Eleanor Lowe, Helen Ostovich and Richard Cave, (2010), 1.1. 296-305. <<http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/brome/frame.html>> [accessed 27 July 2012] This edition offers a facsimile of Q1 (1652) alongside a modernised transcription, but

The battle between nature and nurture is fought by Springlove in an internal civil war, which nature ultimately wins. Springlove feels stifled by Oldrents' philanthropy; while acknowledging the positive effects of an education and a secure post in the household, his sense that his true nature is being eroded, and his freedom and "desire of liberty" is under threat, means that he views the effects of education not as good, but evil. Oldrents is horrified at Springlove's description of his need to return to the beggars as akin to a Pilgrimage, failing to understand Springlove's resentment of the gratitude he should feel towards his rescuer. Oldrents imposes a cloying Christian charity onto Springlove, and expects gratitude from the unwilling recipient.

When describing his first encounter with Oldrents to the young lovers, Springlove revels in his self-portrait as a wretch, as though he were the thief and sinner exposed to the sympathetic gaze of the God-like Oldrents:

*Springlove:* My head was dirty clouted, and this leg  
 Swaddled with Rags, the other naked, and  
 My body clad, like his upon the Gibbet.  
 Yet He, with searching eyes, through all my Rags  
 And counterfeit Postures, made discovery  
 Of his Man, Springlove [...] (2.1.927-932 )

The Biblical undertones are strong in Act II, where Brome portrays Springlove as a Prodigal Son. When he runs away from Oldrents, his master orders that the money he has left should be held in trust until his return. The Puritannical steward Randal, like the elder brother in the parable, complains that Oldrents has wasted the money which should be used to feed the deserving poor. Oldrents in

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for ease of reference I am quoting the line numbers in the Q1 text. Further references are given after quotations in the text

Springlove's eyes is portrayed as a God-like all-seeing father figure, but his rescue has left Springlove with resentment against this 'father', and he sets out to convince Rachel and Meriel to try to escape parental authority. He persuades the girls to run away by using an argument which plays on their anxieties surrounding Oldrent's fears of the prophecy:

*Springlove:* Till you have been Beggars  
 The Sword hangs over him. You cannot think  
 Upon an Act of greater Piety  
 Unto your Father, then t' expose your selves  
 Brave Volunteers [---] whence [---]  
 You bring him a perpetual Peace and Joy  
 By expiating the Prophecy that torments him. (2.1.949 – 57)

Springlove has to protect the loss of his identity, which is in danger of being suffocated by Oldrents' kindly philanthropy, and does so by punishing Oldrents in inflicting his worst fears upon him. Brome shows how resentful the beneficiaries of philanthropists can be. By reinterpreting the rejection of their father as an act of redemption, in order to set his mind at rest, Springlove argues that Rachel and Meriel will be performing an act of redemption, in effect being cruel to be kind.

Springlove's twisted logic is persuasive, and Mephistophelean in its incitement to disobedience and disorder. It also reveals, as Brome shows later, an unconscious desire of a true son to rebel against his actual father, for at the end of the play Springlove is revealed to be Oldrents' natural son, product of a single night of sexual irresponsibility, "in heat of Youth" (5.1.3146). Springlove rebels against Oldrents' domineering philanthropy, and Rachel and Meriel feel stifled by his over-vigilance. This is shown not only to reflect a natural concern for their well-being, but also the product of a guilt reaction, for Oldrents is aware that his



grandfather cheated another man out of his inheritance, and that he is therefore bequeathing stolen property to his daughters.<sup>118</sup> Brome unpacks the image of the saintly father figure to reveal a flawed human being, haunted by his past. Those who are the subjects of his gifts feel stifled by his kindness - Springlove is a “Swallow in a Cage” (1.1.230), and during the play it becomes clear that Oldrents is as fanatical about his philanthropy as Springlove is about his beggary.

Brome’s view chimes with the Caroline world view in that, at the beginning of the comedy his characters are temporarily freed by the abdication of responsibilities, and at the end they learn that they must always return to them. This has implications for the question of inheritance when Patrico confronts Oldrents who has unwittingly deprived him of his birthright by way of an injustice perpetrated two generations beforehand by their grandfathers. Brome shows that, once done, the injustice may continue down through generations; not only has Oldrents inadvertently usurped Patrico’s lands, but by his recklessness he has denied Springlove his inheritance. Springlove is the product of a single night of passion between Oldrents and Patrico’s sister (Brome’s excision of mothers in this play means that the parent/child relationships concentrate upon fathers and children). In order for all to be set right, Patrico’s lands must be restored to him, and Springlove too must receive his due as son to Oldrents and brother to Rachel and Meriel.

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<sup>118</sup> The play ends with the revelation that the mysterious ‘gypsy priest’ Patrico, is in fact the grandson of Wrought-on, the man who was cheated by Oldrents’ grandfather. Patrico’s sister was the girl with whom Oldrents enjoyed a single night of passion which led to the conception of Springlove. By recognising Springlove as his official heir, Oldrents is therefore able to repair his grandfather’s act of injustice and restore the stolen lands to Wrought-on’s family.

At the end of *A Jovial Crew* events come full circle, the contemporary social order is restored, and justice is seen to be done. Springlove the Prodigal Son is welcomed home by his father, the lovers are reunited, and responsibilities reassumed. By setting up the beggars' ideology with its belief systems and rules, and then revealing it to be as hypocritical as any other, Brome satirises not only the obvious target of religion, but also questions the validity of attempting to establish a truly utopian and republican society. The Restoration audience, some of whom had lived through a republic, might have had similar questions – or may rather have refuted the argument if, in their opinion, the utopia had failed.<sup>119</sup>

As Brome showed, escape to the country did not result in a pastoral idyllic existence; instead, he reflects the resentment or anxiety of those gentry who received Charles I's instructions to return to their estates. This might be understood in terms of the pre-War struggle to hold together a crumbling social structure; but it is possible, too, that audiences of the early 1640s felt little more than a vague nervousness at the potential consequences of the growing rift between King and Parliament – a sense of unease which was quickly justified.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Sean Kelsey has shown that the success of the republic was undermined by its failure to organise itself in the event of a monarch-less state, in *Inventing a Republic: The Political Culture of the English Commonwealth 1649-1653* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997). In *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), Nigel Smith has argued that the English Republic lacked confidence in its manifesto of a Utopia. David Underdown has suggested that Charles II was able to return due to the incompetence of the republicans, rather than the strategic skill of his equally incompetent supporters. David Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603 – 1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, repr. 1987); and *Royalist Conspiracy in England 1649 – 1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960).

<sup>120</sup> 'In the 1640s royalist poets needed large reserves of optimism... to sustain a vision of the future that could overlap the calamities of the present.' Graham Parry, 'A Troubled Arcadia' in *Literature and the English Civil War*, ed. by

For the next generation in the 1660s, however, Brome's play reflects the terrible realisation of these fears. The Restoration audience who watched the re-staging of *A Jovial Crew* had lived through the Civil War, the execution of the monarch and the collapse of the established hierarchy, and received this comedy in the light of the ultimately unsuccessful Republic.

### ***Beggars Bush***

John Fletcher also depicts the theme of reclaiming inheritance against the background of a beggars' community in *Beggars Bush*, originally performed at Charles I's court in 1622, published in 1647, and revived on the stage by Davenant in 1661. The parallels with Charles II, his father, and Cromwell are clear; in *Beggars Bush*, after a seven-year war, Flanders has been usurped by the general Woolfort whilst Gerrard, the rightful Earl, is in exile and will later be elected the King of the Beggars. His son, Florez, is also in hiding as Goswin, a merchant of Bruges. The voice of conscience in the person of Hubert, Woolfort's councillor, rebukes him:

*Hubert:* [...]why what are you?

*Woolfort:* Your Prince and Master,  
The Earle of Flaunders.

*Hubert:* By a proper title,  
Rais'd to it by cunning circumvention, force,  
Blood, and prescriptions.<sup>121</sup>

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Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 50.

<sup>121</sup> John Fletcher (and Philip Massinger?), *Beggars Bush*, in *The Dramatic Works of Beaumont and Fletcher*, general ed. Fredson Bowers, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966-1996), I.2.31-34, (III, p. 250). Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

Oliver Cromwell's desire to be king was well known; his funeral rites echoed those of James I, and the waxen effigy which represented the corpse (hastily buried due to a messy embalming) was dressed in coronation robes, holding an orb and sceptre during its seven days' lying in.<sup>122</sup> The encounter between Hubert and Woolfort provides a potentially cathartic scene for the Restoration audience:

*Hubert:* Nor stand you there  
 To let us onely mourne the impious meanes  
 By which you got it, but your cruelties since  
 So far transcend your former bloody illls, As if compar'd, they  
 onely would appeare  
 Essayes of mischiefe[...]  
*Woolfort:* O repeat them not,  
 'Tis hell to heare them nam'd.  
*Hubert:* You should have thought,  
 That hell would be your punishment when you did them.  
 (I.2.80-88)

Gerrard suffers a painful existence in limbo far from Brome's utopian world of beggary. Like Woolfort, he uses guile to gain his ends, persuading his son to influence the votes which make him King of the Beggars. Nevertheless, he is lauded by his peers:

*Higgen:* [...] by that beard  
 Thou wert found out, and mark'd for Sovereignty.

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<sup>122</sup> Charles Whitney has described how, to contemporaries, Cromwell was seen as 'Oliver Tamburlaine'. (Whitney, p. 58.) Sharpe and Zwicker have argued that the commonwealth failed to provide a counter-image to that of the martyred King, and also failed to challenge the traditional appeal of monarchy. Instead, Cromwell behaved as king in all but name. *Refiguring Revolutions: Aesthetics and Politics from the English Revolution to the Romantic Revolution*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Berkeley and California: University of California Press, 1998). Antonia Fraser has explored how Cromwell's funeral imitated that of James I, complete with a lying in state at Whitehall, and an effigy which was recumbent for the first five days before being raised upright to symbolise Cromwell's ascent to heaven. Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell Our Chief of Men* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1973), pp. 681-85.

[...]Long may it grow,  
 And thick and fair, that who lives under it  
 May live as safe as under *Beggar's Bush*  
 Of which this is the thing, that but the type. (II.1.92-93, 96-99)

Like Brome's 'Jovial Crew', Fletcher's beggars sing a song extolling the joys of freedom from the rules of society – 'be it peace, or be it war, here at liberty we are' (2.1.151-52) - but their existence is not portrayed as an attractive alternative. *Beggar's Bush* is a play about restitution and reclamation, but the characters have no control over their situations and cannot choose to opt out. As a "cross-over" comedy, it provides a reminder of the past through its reiteration of themes of exile and loss, and in its positive resolution, offers hope for the future. This makes it an obvious comedy to "cross-over" from Charles I's reign to Charles II's.

### ***The Committee***

During their exile in the 1640s and 1650s, aristocratic amateur authors such as Sir Robert Howard wrote plays which dealt with the unfair sequestration of land and the devastating loss of property and inheritance; many of them had personal experience of sequestration, and convey a deep sense of bitterness at the 'most explosive social consequence of Puritan domination.'<sup>123</sup> The summary of cases brought in the *Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Advancement of Monye 1642 - 1658* includes the names of Sir Peter Killigrew, Thomas's brother;

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<sup>123</sup> Dharwadker, 'The Comedy of Dispossession', 419. Howard, like Davenant and Killigrew, displayed great self-confidence in his literary abilities; Carryl Nelson Thurber has commented, "[---] his reputation as a boaster and a pretender was due, in large part, to his insistence upon his own merits as a poet and playwright." *Sir Robert Howard's Comedy "The Committee"* ed. by Carryl Nelson Thurber (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1921), p. 14

William Cavendish (then) Earl of Newcastle; Sir Robert Howard; and the Master of the Revels, Sir Henry Herbert. It was not enough, as professional writers such as John Tatham and Thomas Jordan suggested, to satirise the Puritans for their wrong-headedness and lack of judgement; the Royalist aristocrats depicted themselves more subjectively as victims robbed of their inheritance and their birthright – bringing them closer to their restored monarch, Charles II, who had suffered the ultimate deprivation of inheritance and birthright. When their plays were performed on the London stage, the exiled Royalists told their Civil War story – conveniently overlooking the accusations of neglect and disinterest in their estates which had been levelled against them before that War. In these comedies Charles II was invited to empathise with his subjects who had also been devastated by their experiences during the war. I would suggest that he may have permitted the public staging of the comedies as a kind of apology to his subjects, a signal that he understood the loss that they had sustained in supporting the Stuarts' cause.

*The Committee* was staged by the King's Company in 1663, and printed in 1665. The play's title comes from the detailed satirical depiction of a sequestration committee meeting in Act 2, the first time such a meeting had been presented on the English stage. The Royalist colonels Careless and Blunt attempt to regain their estates, only to find that the committee members are seizing the lands on behalf of the parliamentary cause and do not intend to release them. The committee's secretary Obadiah reminds the chairman Mr Day how he made a judgement against the son of a suspected Royalist:

*Obadiah:* One of your last Debates was upon the Plea  
Of an infant, whose Estate is under Sequestration.

*Mr Day:* And fit to be kept so till he comes of age,  
 And may answer for himself; that he may not  
 Be in possession of the Land till he can promise  
 He will not turn to the Enemy.<sup>124</sup>

The conversation develops into an illustration of the Biblical text “the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon their children” :<sup>125</sup>

*Obadiah:* The plea is, that the party died without any---[Offer]  
 For taking up Armes; but in his opinion, for the King:  
 He has left his Widow with childe, which will  
 Be the Heir; and his Trustees complain of wrong,  
 And claim the Estate.

*2 Committee Man:* Well, the Father in his opinion was a Cavalier.

*Obadiah:* So it is given in. (2.1.p.90)

This information is supplied as hearsay, the unsubstantiated evidence of a witness – ‘So it is given in’ – and the committee accepts it as fact. Howard emphasises the injustice of their decision, based on gossip rather than solid proof, and also the Puritan fanaticism which underpins the committee:

*2 Committee Man:* Nay ‘twas so, I warrant you; and there’s a young Cavalier in his Widow’s Belly; I warrant you that too;  
 For the perverse generation increaseth: I move  
 Therefore that their two Estates may remain in the hands  
 Of our Brethren here, and fellow-labourers,  
 Mr *Joseph Blemish* and Mr *Jonathan Headstrong*,  
 And Mr *Ezekiel Scrape*, and they to be accountable  
 At our pleasures; whereby they may have a godly  
 Opportunity of doing good for themselves.

*Mr Day:* Order it, order it.

*3 Committee Man:* Since it is your pleasures, we are content  
 To take the burthen upon us, and be  
 Stewards to the Nation.

*2 Committee Man:* Now verily it seemeth to me

<sup>124</sup> Sir Robert Howard, *The Committee, A Comedy* (London, 1665), 2.1.p.90. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

<sup>125</sup> ‘You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me.’ *Exodus* 20: 5 and *Deuteronomy* 5: 9.

That the work goeth forward, when Brethren  
Hold together in unity. (2.1.p.90.)

The implications of promiscuity attached to the child's mother is, Howard shows, an example of Puritan anti-Royalist propaganda. This anti-Royalism is undermined by the surnames (despite their Christian Biblical first names) of the men who will take over the estate – 'Blemish', 'Headstrong' and 'Scrape'. It is easy to imagine how Howard views the eventual fate of the estate. Day's peremptory command 'Order it, order it' implies the numerous such cases which the committee will review, but also the haste with which the Puritans seize the lands from their rightful owners. The hypocritical reply of the self-appointed 'Stewards to the Nation' and 'Brethren' exemplifies the fanaticism which Royalists saw in their Puritan usurpers. Howard expresses the deep sense of unfairness felt by the Royalists:

*Colonel Blount:* How, the Committee ready to sit. Plague  
[*Manet C. Blunt*]  
On their honours [...]  
'Tis pretty, that such as I have been, must compound  
For their having been Rascals. (1.1.p.74)

Howard summarises the way in which contemporaries tended to depict the conflict between the Royalists and the Puritans, the former seeing themselves as victims, the latter as righteous victors:

*Colonel Careless:*[...] my question is only,  
Which of you is to have our Estates: or will you  
Make traytors of them, draw 'um , and quarter 'um[...]  
*Mr Day:* You may perceive they have Spirits never to be  
Reconcil'd; they walk according to Nature, and are  
Full of inward darkness.  
*2 Committee Man:* It is well truly for the good people, that they  
Are so obstinate, whereby their Estates may  
Of right fall into the hands of the Chosen, which



Truly is a Mercy. (2.1. p. 93)

Day and the second committee man genuinely believe that Careless and Blount are ‘full of inward darkness’, and that (as Calvinists) they themselves are ‘the Chosen’ meek, who should inherit the earth. Howard’s juxtaposition of particularly emotive language is effective; the Royalist themes of wrongful execution, of hanging, drawing and quartering, are here set against the Puritan fanaticism that they were born to inherit the earth. Following *Michaelmas Term*, Howard’s personification of the estates enables him to play on the sense in which the committee-men in their role as executors divide the estates up, and by implication legally kill them, making them “traytors” to be hung, drawn and quartered.

The most overt criticism of the Commonwealth in *The Committee* is expressed in a song. This song, performed by a musician, and therefore not linked to a particular character who might give it added bias, provides an overtly Royalist summary of the way in which the English people have been tricked and deceived by the Puritans, and how the order of things has been disastrously overturned:

Now the Vail is pull’d off, and this pitiful Nation  
Too late see the gull of a Kirk Reformation,  
How all things that shou’d be  
Are turn’d topsie turvy (4.1. p.113)

The 'Vail', a metaphor used to suggest the secrecy of the Catholic church, is pulled off to reveal the Puritan church beneath, as the 'pitiful Nation' discovers too late that it has exchanged one dominant religion for another: <sup>126</sup>

The Freedom we have,  
Our Prince made a Slave,  
And the Masters must now turn the Waiters.  
The great ones obey,  
While the Rascals do sway,  
And the Loyal to Rebels are Traitors. (4.1.p.114)

The empty 'Freedom' of knowing 'Our Prince made a Slave' is no real freedom, but the singer warns 'the Masters must now turn the Waiters' until their Prince can be freed from his slavery. The 'Waiters', the erstwhile 'great ones' now obey the 'Rascals', and nothing is what it seems, nothing can be taken at face value - 'the Loyal to Rebels are Traitors':

The Pulpits are crowded with tongues of their own,  
And the Preachers Spiritual Committee-Men grown,  
To denounce Sequestration  
Or Souls of old Fashion:  
They Rail and they Pray,  
Till they quite preach away  
The Wealth that was once the wise Cities. (4.1.p.114)

'The Wealth that was once the wise Cities' is being dissipated by a torrent of empty words from former preachers, not self-styled 'Committee-men'. Wisdom and order have therefore been replaced by folly and injustice, London has been impoverished, and the world 'turn'd upside down.'

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<sup>126</sup> Charles I was accused of favouring the Catholics, always a source of distrust to the Protestant English, but to the Royalists the Puritan parliamentarians were viewed as equally fanatical and dangerous in their attempts to impose their beliefs.

This chapter has discussed the seventeenth-century preoccupation with questions of property, inheritance, land, and the anxieties surrounding its possession. The existence of an idyllic Utopia in the country was questioned, especially in the reperformance of the “cross-over” plays in the Restoration. After the upheavals of the Civil Wars and Commonwealth, the concept of inheritance had changed. A landowner might have purchased his property only a few months beforehand; it was no longer an assumption that it had been in his or her family for generations. The devastating impact and, in many cases, injustice of sequestration is a central preoccupation of the Royalist comedies produced on the officially reopened Restoration stages. Along with the financial hardship incurred by loss of property came the severing of family ties. The practice of passing on inherited property from generation to generation was discontinued as the property itself disappeared. The lands which had been seized under the sequestration laws were now held by those who had no prior claim. The later 1650s saw returning Royalists seeking to buy back their property, having paid their heavy sequestration fines. The nature of inheritance, and its deprivation and restoration, is therefore a key subject in both pre- and post-Commonwealth comedies. To the audience of Charles I’s court, the deprivation of inheritance was a very real fear, although not yet a fact, and so the plays are charged with a sense of anxiety before the Civil War. Charles II and those around him were largely accustomed to the loss of inheritance and the effect of the deprivations of the Commonwealth, whether at home or abroad. They might empathise more strongly with the symbolic and actual restoration of inheritance, recalling former hardship and celebrating the return to order.

## Chapter Two: Revisions for restoration

In this chapter I will show how Abraham Cowley and Thomas Killigrew use “cross-over” comedy to offer a response to the uncertainty which existed before the English Civil War, to the upheaval and conflict of the war years, and to the austerity of the ensuing commonwealth. Charles I and Henrietta Maria had used courtly masques and entertainments as public reiterations of an idealistic society, in which loving relationships between men and women were expressed in terms of platonic, non-sexual desire. Henrietta Maria was particularly influential and committed to this neo-platonism, which, like utopianism, was questioned by the court playwrights in their satirical comedies.<sup>127</sup> In contrast to the romantic innocent world promoted by his parents, the more worldly and cynical Charles II encouraged a court which was notorious for its sexual licence, where platonic love was mocked, and adultery was offered as an acceptable way of behaving.<sup>128</sup> In my discussion of Killigrew’s *The Parson’s Wedding*, I shall show how the King’s rejection of his parents’ attitudes and behaviour finds expression in a new pattern of social behaviour, as presented by various characters in the play. This “cross-over” comedy, written at some point between 1637 and 1641 offers a sceptical view of the Royal doctrine of enduring platonic love.<sup>129</sup> It may or may not have

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<sup>127</sup> Kevin Sharpe has discussed the mockery of neo-platonism in *Criticism and Compliment*, p. 22-39.

<sup>128</sup> Samuel Pepys comments in his diary entry for 1 January 1662/3, ‘In fine, I find that there is nothing almost but bawdry at Court from top to bottom[...]’ Pepys, IV, p. 1. After consistent references over the years to Charles II’s lax morality, in 1667, John Evelyn and Pepys were embarrassed by Louis XIV’s mockery of Charles ‘that makes his bastards princes, and loses his revenue upon them – and makes his mistresses his maisters[...]’ Pepys, VIII, p. 183.

<sup>129</sup> Robert Wilcher has commented on ‘the elaborate rituals of flattery presented by the salon culture that Charles I’s young queen brought with her’ and asserts that Suckling’s *The Goblins* was ‘a deliberate and skilful parody of Shakespearean

been performed before the closure of the theatres in 1642; however its staging or re-staging in 1664 functions as a clear endorsement of Charles II's libertine society.<sup>130</sup> Before turning to Killigrew, however, I will consider another "cross-over" comedy: Abraham Cowley's *Cutter of Coleman Street*, performed in 1662, which is a reworked version of his comedy *The Guardian*, performed in 1641. Cowley's revisions reflect the growing movement towards realism in the immediate post-war theatre of the seventeenth century. However, he is also self-consciously aware of the power of theatre to bridge the gap between artificial representation and real life, and how one can inform and affect the other; he steps in and out of the action, at one moment an involved performer, at another a detached observer commenting on the author's craft and even the authorial persona. The theatrical staging of the relationship between artificial and real worlds previously explored by authors such as Jonson and Brome is now taken further by Cowley and Killigrew.

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varieties of romance and comedy, written to appeal to the sophisticated taste of those for whom the absurdities of courtier tragicomedy[.....]were worthy at least of amused contempt.' Robert Wilcher, *The Discontented Cavalier: The Work of Sir John Suckling in its Social, Religious, Political, and Literary Contexts*, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), p. 130, and p. 235.

<sup>130</sup> Montague Summers was unconvinced that *The Parson's Wedding* was actually performed before the closure of the theatres: 'I am inclined to think that Killigrew had his script ready and perhaps even in the actors' hands during the summer of 1642. But the times were threatening, revolution was in the air, the very existence of the theatre was menaced, and it is hardly likely that under such hazardous conditions the company would be eager to stage a piece which demanded a considerable outlay and necessitated special arrangements.' *Restoration Comedies: The Parson's Wedding, The London Cuckolds, & Sir Courtly Nice, or, It Cannot Be*, ed. by Montague Summers (London: Jonathan Cape, 1921), p. xxix.

*The Guardian and Cutter of Coleman Street*

It seems very possible that Davenant, staging private theatricals at Rutland House in 1658, and planning to reopen a public theatre, would have been looking out for new material. It may therefore have been Davenant who encouraged Cowley to rework *The Guardian*. The author himself commented, ‘There being many things in it which I disliked, and finding myself for some days idle, and alone in the Countrey, I fell upon the changing of it almost wholly, as now it is, and as it was play’d since at his Royal Highness’s Theatre under this New name.’<sup>131</sup> Cowley, famous for his classical Royalist poetry, had the scholarly reputation which Davenant wished to enlist in his claim to reform the theatre, and also conveniently had a half-share in the Duke’s Company. Cowley may have believed that *Cutter* was intended for private performance at Rutland House; in the event, the piece proved to be one of the more popular plays for Davenant’s Duke’s Company at Lincoln’s Inn Fields, playing for a full week at its first outing.<sup>132</sup>

Some scholars, however, question the date of revision. Theodore Kaouk argues that Cowley was attempting to rehabilitate himself with the King, and that he lied to contemporaries that he had re-worked the play between 1656 - 1658 in order to ally himself with other Royalist authors who were writing in secret in the late 1650s. According to Kaouk, ‘the overwhelming textual evidence in many of

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<sup>131</sup> Abraham Cowley’s *Cutter of Coleman Street*, ed. Darlene Johnson Gravett (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987), Preface, p. 30, 14 – 8. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

<sup>132</sup> Despite the rather negative attack on the comedy by an anonymous ‘man abut town’, whose ‘letter’ was purportedly read/performed in a summer droll of 1662: The Cutter of Coleman Street had more fame  
Before the Author chang’d its name  
And shewd himself an Englishman right  
By mending of things to spoyle them quite  
(Hotson, p. 247, ll 45 – 48.)

Cowley's literary endeavours after 1656, culminating in the revision of *Cutter of Coleman Street*, indicates that this is precisely the sort of narrative the poet was attempting to fashion for himself, and attempting with increasing boldness and desperation as the likelihood of the monarchy's return increased.'<sup>133</sup> Kaouk believes *Cutter* was actually composed in 1660, closer to the time of the play's performance, and that Henrietta Maria subsequently rewarded Cowley with 'a significant percentage of her land in Kent for his own use' although 'whether or not Charles himself had anything to do with it will also likely remain unknown.' (Kaouk, 43) This does imply a forgiveness by the Royal family, and would fit in well with the general picture of Henrietta Maria's rewarding of former favourite authors whom her son would not be politically advised to endorse, and who might therefore see their plays performed by the Duke's - rather than the King's - Company. However, the most recent editor of *Cutter of Coleman Street*, Darlene Johnson Gravett, supports the date of 1658 as the date of revision, and I would tend to agree with her.<sup>134</sup> A group of authors led by Davenant, and including Cowley and John Tatham, were beginning to stage theatrical entertainments in private houses at around this time. Davenant's *A First Day's Entertainment at Rutland House* was staged in 1658; Tatham's *The Rump* was staged privately in

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<sup>133</sup> Theodore F. Kaouk, "'Perjur'd Rebel'" Equivocal Allegiance and Abraham Cowley's *Cutter of Coleman Street*, *Restoration*, 33.2 (2009), 25-46 (p. 32). Future references to this source will be given as the author's name followed by the page reference.

<sup>134</sup> After reviewing the more anecdotal evidence for dating the revisions to 1658-1659, Johnson Gravett provides two more substantial reasons for her acceptance of the dates: Cowley's change of the topical words, 'play', 'opera', and 'mask' in Act 5, arguing that he would not have been likely to bother to change these words after the resumption of public performances in 1660; and the alteration of the date of *Cutter*'s pretended 'Vision' in Act 4.5, from 'this same day, the twelfth of March in the year of grace 1641' to (in *The Guardian*) 'this same day, the first of the seventh month, in the year of Grace 1658.' *Cutter*, pp. 9-10.

1659 or early 1660. It seems likely that Cowley, as a friend and co-shareholder of Davenant's company, would also have been writing his revised version of his comedy at around this time. Kaouk's portrait of a panic-stricken Cowley, anxious to win favour with the man whose parents he was rumoured to have betrayed, is not entirely persuasive. Rather, I see Cowley as an opportunist, like Davenant, who was likely to follow his associate in pursuing the short-term re-opening of the theatres in a Cromwellian-ruled England.<sup>135</sup>

*Cutter of Coleman Street* was performed by Davenant's Duke of York's company in front of the same Royal spectator – Prince, now King Charles who had seen the original comedy, *The Guardian*, 'at Trinity-Colledg in Cambridge upon the twelfth of March, 1641'.<sup>136</sup> Cowley relates that it was subsequently performed by exiled Royalists in Ireland 'several times after privately during the troubles[... ]with good application', before being published in 1650. Cowley's revisions make the play more sophisticated, moving from plots concerning adolescent romantic love and tragicomic heroines, likely to appeal to the neoplatonic Court of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, to a sharper cynical satire more suited to the post-war court of Charles II. Cowley implicitly assumes a socio-material shift away from property as a currency in Charles I's London, towards sex as a currency in Charles II's London. In both worlds, money acts as the transactional agent.

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<sup>135</sup> Cowley's description of *The Guardian* in his preface to his *Poems* complains that the play was only half-finished and badly performed by the amateur scholars and officers at Trinity College. Abraham Cowley, *Poems*, (1656), Preface, sig. 2v.

<sup>136</sup> According to the title page of the 1650 publication of *The Guardian*, reprinted in *Abraham Cowley: Essays, Plays and Sundry Verses* ed. by A.R. Waller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906), p 159. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.



The revisions which Cowley made to his original text offer an insight into the way in which the cross-over plays were shaped for the ‘new’ audiences of the 1660s. The Prologue to *The Guardian*, which Cowley would have overseen and approved, although some doubt exists over his authorship, is uneasily aware of the ‘troubles of the Times’, and the growing censoriousness of the Puritan parliaments:

But our Scene’s *London* now, and by the rout  
We perish if the Roundheads be about:  
For now no ornament the head must wear,  
No Bays, no Mitre, not so much as Hair. (*Prologue*, 5 – 8)<sup>137</sup>

With post-war hindsight, there is a sense of sullen defiance in Cowley’s Prologue to *Cutter*:

[...]the timerous Wits of late refuse,  
Though laded, to put forth upon the Stage,  
Affrighted by the Critiques of this Age. (*Prologue*, 8 – 10)

The ‘Critiques’ may apply equally to censorious Puritans, and to pretenders to literary judgement. Whereas Charles II was named ‘Morning Star’ in Cowley’s earlier play, now he is ‘Neptune’ presiding in regal state over his ‘Narrow seas of Wit’ in the Prologue written for the Court performance of *Cutter*.

One of the most striking stylistic changes is that, in *Cutter*, Cowley develops the use of place-realism to produce a more openly political satire,

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<sup>137</sup> The Prologue to *The Guardian* was published in 1642, before the play’s appearance in print, and was attributed to a “Francis Cole”. Autrey Nell Wiley discounts the possibility of Cole’s existence in ‘The Prologue and Epilogue to the *Guardian*’, *Review of English Studies* 40 (1934), 443 – 447 in *JSTOR* <http://www.jstor.org/stable/508027> [accessed 26 February 2008]. But a Francis Cole, or Coles, did exist – and is credited on the frontispiece of Davenant’s *The Unfortunate Lovers* (1643) as the publisher. It is not unlikely that the connection between Davenant, Cowley, and Francis Cole or Coles may have existed in the 1640s, when Cowley’s comedy was first performed.

commenting on real events which had occurred only a few years beforehand. As I shall show in Chapter Four, John Tatham took this journalistic style of writing still further, in his comedy *The Rump* (1660), by satirising real people as well as describing recent events. *Cutter of Coleman Street* is specifically set in the year 1658, and the location of Coleman Street was known to contemporaries as being largely inhabited by Puritans. The play's change of name highlights an arena of religious and political opposition to the King, and the Royalist characters talk about his hoped for Restoration - conversations which the 1662 audience could appreciate with the benefit of hindsight. For example, Aurelia uses this as an argument to dissuade her father from marrying the wealthy Puritan Widow Barebottle:

*Aurelia:* But, Sir, suppose the King should come in again (as I hope he will for all these Villains) and you have your own again o' course, you'd be very proud of a Soap-boylers Widow then in *Hide*-park, Sir. (3.1.36-39)

During the Civil War, Cowley was employed as coder and decipherer of the correspondence between Charles I and Henrietta Maria; it is unclear whether he also leaked the letters to the Parliamentarians which were later published as *The King's Cabinet Open'd* (1645). Cowley later returned, like Davenant, to work for Cromwell, and it is this uncertainty about his loyalties which may have contributed to the opposition he encountered at the early performances of *Cutter*. The normally tolerant Charles II appears to have believed that Cowley did betray his parents.<sup>138</sup> Anxious to ingratiate himself with an unusually unforgiving Charles II, Cowley uses *Cutter* to link Cromwell with "word" crimes in particular,

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<sup>138</sup> Dale Randall comments that the King would not permit Cowley to kiss his hand when the author paid his respects at the Restoration, and reads this as evidence of their continuing estrangement. (Randall, p. 289.)

with informing against people, secrecy, plotting and lying. Cutter suspects his associate Worm of lying to him and comments that he would be surprised ‘if he be n’t Cromwel’s Agent for all the Taverns between Kings-street and the Devil at Temple-bar.’ (1.6.89-90) Aurelia justifies her own plotting and intrigues by referring to the known practices of the government:

*Aurelia:* I see t’is no small part of policy to keep some little Spies in an Enemie’s quarters; The Parliament had reason (2.1.1-2)

Act 2.8 of *Cutter* features a drinking song against ‘Old Noll’ Cromwell and in favour of the return of the ‘Royal Travailler’:

*Jolly:* Worm, Cutter, sing... Give me the Glass... Ile venture once more What e’re come on’t, here’s a health to the Royal Travailler, and so Finis Coronat.

*Worm:* Come on boys, Vivat; have at you agen then.  
Now a Pox on the Poll of old Politique *Noll* .

*Both:* Wee’l drink till we bring,  
In triumph back, the King,

[*Cutter* /] *Worm:* May he live till he see,  
Old *Noll* upon a Tree. (2.8.204-212)

Words were also viewed as hugely important by the Puritans, and were not used lightly. Toasts to the return of the King, or indeed any public reference to the exiled Charles II, were viewed as treasonable and therefore carried the death penalty.<sup>139</sup> By 1661, however, *Cutter* could be performed with patriotic enthusiasm in front of a Restoration audience, especially (as Cowley was perhaps hoping) an audience which included the King and his family.

Cowley adapted and rewrote sections of the text of *The Guardian* to create *Cutter of Coleman Street*, but significantly left some scenes almost entirely

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<sup>139</sup> ‘Men were bound over to stand their trials for drinking confusion to the Lord Protector or healths to King Charles and the Duke of York.’ C.H.Firth, ‘The Royalists under the Protectorate’, *The English Historical Review* 52 (1937), 645.

unaltered, changing instead the order in which they appeared. This reveals something of his dramatic intentions for a new audience. Initially it appears that the changes and cuts are made to move the plot along. Act 1 of *The Guardian* is compressed to make Act 1 of *Cutter* by means of the characters relating certain plot details which bring the audience up to date with events. Four of the eight scenes (which in *The Guardian* establish the play's atmosphere and background) are omitted entirely, and referred to only when necessary for the plot.<sup>140</sup> The complicated love plot of *The Guardian* is summarised and moved along in a few lines in *Cutter*, and whereas the opening scene of *The Guardian* had presented the 1640s court audience with the topical theme of increased taxes and their impact upon the people, *Cutter* opens with a different but equally topical theme for a middle-class audience made up of courtiers and gentry: the necessity for arranged marriages in a society financially crippled after the war.

*The Guardian* is Cowley's version of a Jonsonian 'city comedy' with a London setting and a plot borrowed from Roman antecedents. But its performance in 1641 is interesting in its discussion of issues which were to underpin the plays written by the Civil War exiles, and for its implicit critique of Charles I. Echoing Middleton's cynical view of human nature, Cowley shows how poverty and the fear of poverty corrupt the closest of human ties. Captain Blade, the eponymous 'Guardian', in no way guards or protects his niece /ward Lucia, rather plotting to

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<sup>140</sup> These references appear in 1.1, 1.2, 1.7 and 1.8 of *The Guardian*. 1.1 involves the Widow, Tabytha, Cutter and Dogrel in a comic discussion of rising costs. 1.2 introduces Captain Blade who explains his motivation for cheating Lucia. 1.7 is a romantic dialogue between Young Truman and Lucia. 1.8 shows Aurelia spying upon the lovers and introduces her hatred for Lucia – this is summarised in a soliloquy by Aurelia in *Cutter*, 2.1.

cheat her of her rightful inheritance. The relationship of guardian and ward, familiar from classical comedy, is questioned and undermined by Cowley's contemporary 'spin' in *The Guardian*. Blade's own estate has been seized by Parliament; he is pursuing a wealthy (but reluctant) Puritan widow, and can see a quick solution to his financial problems by trapping Lucia into a marriage of which he can publicly disapprove.

In the other main plot, Blade's daughter Aurelia, in love with Lucia's faithful suitor Young Truman, plots to ruin her cousin and secure Young Truman for herself. In *The Guardian* she is young and self-centred, thwarted in her love for Young Truman, and determined to enact revenge upon Lucia:

*Aurelia:* [...] since 'tis my fate  
To love so ill, I'll try how I can hate. (1.8, p.175)

In *Cutter*, Cowley develops Aurelia into an older, more sophisticated rival to Lucia. Aurelia has waited three years for revenge on her cousin and former lover:

*Aurelia:* If they would allow me but a little time, I could play such a trick with Mr Truman, as should smart sorely for the rest of his Life, and be reveng'd abundantly on my Cozen for getting of him from me, when I was such a foolish Girl three year ago as to be in Love with him. (4.7.1-5)

Cowley's characterisation of Aurelia, the woman who waits for the opportunity to take revenge on her cousin for a lost lover, anticipates the stereotypical Restoration virago such as Etherege's Mrs Love-It in *The Man of Mode* (1676), and culminating in the bitter Mrs Marwood in Congreve's *The Way of the World* (1700). Providing a counterbalance to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's account of male homosociality in Restoration comedy, in Cowley's depiction, women see each

other as potential rivals, and the men are the objects of desire.<sup>141</sup> Whereas Aurelia in *The Guardian* enjoys the prospect of gaining money and status through marrying well, for Aurelia in *Cutter* it is the excitement of the intrigue and the chase, and the power she gains over her adversaries which is important. An independent Restoration woman, she only agrees to marry when her plots and scheming fail – ‘Why then you out-witted me, and I’m content.’ (5.13.47)

Rather than presenting caricatures of Royalists and Puritans, Cowley portrays more realistic characters reacting to war – and his comedy is more credible as a result. As Dale Randall puts it, ‘There are better laughs and more convincingly sinister implications in the likes of *Cutter* and *Blade*.’ (Randall, *Winter Fruit*, p. 72) It also shows Cowley’s awareness of his wider audience, as David Bywaters has noted:

Some part of [Cowley’s] audience was made up of those who had suffered before 1660 for the royal cause, but a great part was made up of those who had quietly cooperated with the interregnum regimes and who in the months since the Restoration had therefore chafed against the self-congratulation and accusatory imputations of the royalists. And no doubt the latter group would have enjoyed seeing their royalist tormentors as Cutters and Worms, as self-interested imposters.<sup>142</sup>

Cowley seems to intend his audience to sympathise more strongly with the renamed Captain Blade. No longer cashiered by the Parliament of Charles I, he

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<sup>141</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, in *Between Men: English and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985, repr. 1992) has argued that all transactions in Restoration comedy are between men and men; women are objectified, and it is the underlying relationships between men which drive the dramatic action. My suggestion here is that Cowley depicts a similar transactional arena between women, while agreeing with Sedgwick that the one transaction which is not meaningful is that between men and women.

<sup>142</sup> David Bywaters, ‘Representations of the Interregnum and Restoration in English drama of the early 1660s.’ *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, 60.244 (2008), 255-270 (p.262).

appears in *Cutter* as the promoted Colonel Jolly, deprived of his estate by the Parliament of Oliver Cromwell:

*Jolly*:...my own Estate was sold for being with the King at *Oxford*... My good Neighbor, I thank him, Collonel Fear-the-Lord Barebottle, a Saint and a Sope-boyler, bought it; but he's dead, and boiling now himself, that's the best of 't; there's a Cavalier's comfort! (1.4.115-20)

However Cowley appears to have misjudged his audience in his attempt to present a realistic picture of human nature with its moral temptations and weaknesses. Jolly's plot to gain his niece's fortune by deception laid Cowley (already seen as an ambivalent Royalist for making peace with Cromwell) open to charges that *Cutter* was anti-Royalist. Cowley acknowledged 'that the person whom I made a true Gentleman, and one both of considerable Quality and Sufferings in the Royal party, should not have a fair and noble Character throughout, but should submit in his great extremities to wrong his Niece for his own Relief.' (*Preface*, p.33) He claimed in self-justification that 'The truth is, I did not intend the Character of a Hero, one of exemplary virtue [...] but an ordinary jovial Gentleman.'

Cowley's description of Jolly emphasises the character's ordinariness – like the audience who saw him, he is a victim of war, 'commonly called a Good Fellow, one not so conscientious as to sterve rather than do the least Injury, and yet endowed with so much sense of Honour as to refuse when that necessity was removed, the gain of five thousand pounds which he might have taken from his Niece by the rigour of a Forfeiture.' (*Preface* , p. 33) Cowley's argument is that during the exceptional circumstances of war we are all capable of treachery and theft. Jolly is therefore no better and no worse than anyone placed in a similar

situation. In making this claim, Cowley positions himself as an anti-idealist whose cynical view of human nature fits well with the world-weary Charles II and the new Restoration society where platonic love becomes sexual desire, words are used to convey lies as well as truth, and moral rigidity is replaced by libertinism. However, his depiction would inevitably prove unpopular with those of his audience who wanted to believe in the idea of Royalism and Royalists as uncompromisingly heroic and self-sacrificing.

Perhaps genuinely, perhaps disingenuously, Cowley expressed surprise that *Cutter* was viewed as “a piece intended for abuse and Satyre against the Kings party”, claiming his intention was to show that ‘the vices and extravagances imputed vulgarly to the Cavaliers, were really committed by Aliens who only usurped that name.’ (*Preface*, p.33). Scholars have tended to accept Cowley’s defence, and to conclude that he was tactless rather than intentionally anti-Royalist. Dale Randall comments, for example, that ‘Cowley should have thought twice about depicting Jolly planning to sell his young ward to Cutter or Worm for a thousand pounds.’ (Randall, p. 292) This conclusion seems slightly questionable, however, for Cowley frequently rewrote and revised his poetry and was seldom careless with his play texts. Rather, he is arguing that greed and need corrupts the closest of human ties; and in so doing implicitly criticises Charles I for precipitating the war which led to this social break-down. It is hardly surprising that he found it difficult – impossible – to rehabilitate himself with Charles II’s son.

Cowley undermines the courtly love and familial idealism of Henrietta Maria’s court and presents instead a realistic portrait of inter-familial strife, which



was particularly relevant to the post-civil war audience whose families had warred internally. In *The Guardian* the destruction of Lucia's reputation by her own family, and her subsequent disgrace, has potentially serious consequences.

Tricked by the disguised Aurelia, young Truman believes Lucia has offered sexual favours to him; he rejects her with horror which turns to extreme loathing.

Burning the letter from 'Lucia' in front of the real Lucia, he exclaims:

Unhappie paper, made of guilty linen.  
 The menstruous reliques of some lustful woman:  
 Thy very ashes here will not be innocent,  
 But flie about, and hurt some chaste mens eyes,  
 As they do mine. (3.3.p.192)

By destroying the letter, Young Truman expresses his desire to destroy Lucia herself, in revenge for her apparent betrayal of their love. Cowley the poet takes over from Cowley the dramatist in young Truman's impassioned outburst. This is a struggle between idealism and realism, which, for the purposes of the plot, ultimately realism has to win. There is a particular care in Cowley's choice of words and their positioning; 'Guilty linen' implies the soiled linen garments cast aside by prostitutes, and this image of soiling is strengthened by the adjective 'menstruous' in the next line. 'menstruous' forces the listener / reader to consider female physicality, the monthly menstrual cycle with its accompanying imagery of blood, and this is immediately juxtaposed with the word 'reliques', a noun which has connotations of death, of memorials, and of saints. Cowley signals Young Truman's tortured mind, as he swings from disgust at Lucia's apparent physical desires back to his quasi-religious belief in their pure romantic love. The relic of that love implies its death and preservation only in the traces of brittle artefacts. As the paper's ashes are blown about by the wind, the letter effectively

refuses to die. Its contents are not ‘innocent’, and therefore sting the eyes of romantic neo-platonists such as Young Truman who believe in the sanctity of love.

In his disappointment, Young Truman swings wildly to the other extreme, viewing women not as saints but as poisonous devils, ruled by uncontrollable passions and exploiting men’s good will:

What are these women made of? Sure we men  
Are of some better mold. Their vows and oaths  
Are like the poisonous Spiders subtil net,  
As dangerous to entrap, and broke as soon.  
Their love, their faith, their selves enslav’d to passion,  
Nothing’s at their command, except their tears,  
And we frail men, whom such heat-drops entice. (3.3.p.193)<sup>143</sup>

Cowley exposes Young Truman as an immature idealist, struggling with his moral principles which he believes are incompatible with his continuing love for his apparently tarnished mistress. The challenge to his theoretical ideals presented by his emotional and sexual desire for Lucia seems to Young Truman to threaten his whole identity, dependent for survival on the principles of courtly platonic love:

*Young Truman:* O she has kill’d my Reason: I have lost  
That and my self forever. (3.9.p.204)

Cowley’s criticism of his hero is also an implicit critique of the courtly love ideal as essentially immature; he shows that Young Truman has to gain

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<sup>143</sup> Young Truman’s speech recalls that of Viola in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*. She is deceiving others through her disguise; he is deceiving himself:

We men may say more, swear more; but indeed  
Our shows are more than will, for still we prove  
Much in our vows, but little in our love.

William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night, or, What You Will*, in *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, gen.eds. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2005), 2.4, 116 – 118.

maturity, before he is finally ready to win Lucia. In his rejection of neo-Platonism, Cowley endorses Charles II's more worldly sexually free court.

A more significant change, typical of the underpinning cynicism in Cowley's rewritten text, is the reworking of the character of Jane. In *The Guardian* Lucia disguises herself as a waiting-woman, Jane, and is taken on by Aurelia; this enables her to foil her cousin's plans to marry Young Truman. Lucia/Jane cannot hide her horror at Aurelia's unkind plots against her, and Aurelia finds her new maid suspiciously over-refined:

*Aurelia:* The wench I see is docile, and will learn; but alas she must have time; she has a little too much City breeding, I see, by Court'sies and forsooths. (4.6.p.216)

Cowley replaces this faux-maid in *Cutter* with a new character, Lucia's maid, still called 'Mrs Jane.'<sup>144</sup> Jane is heartless and silly, enjoying gossip and intrigue with her mistress's cousin, and taking her to spy on the lovers with no apparent concern for the consequences for Lucia. Aurelia regards Jane with contempt, while taking advantage of her thoughtless behaviour:

*Aurelia:* Why does this little Foppilee laugh always? 'tis such a Ninny that she betrays her Mistress, and thinks she does no hurt at all, no, not she (2.6.34-37)

Jane is, again, a product of Cowley's anti-idealistic writing; only concerned for herself, she betrays Lucia in order to gain favour with Aurelia. Cowley may be suggesting cynically that this lack of moral or societal concern is

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<sup>144</sup> The character of Jane as played by Mrs Long in the original performances by the Duke's Company, became known as 'Laughing Jane', and in Cowley's list of 'Persons in the Play' she is described as 'a little, laughing Fop'.

the natural result of the ‘World Turn’d Upside Down’.<sup>145</sup> He may also be offering an apologia for his own ambivalence, arguing that - if he did betray Charles I and Henrietta Maria - this was understandable in the context of a war-torn society.

Cowley may have been hoping that Charles II, known for his understanding and tolerance of human failings, would sympathise with this viewpoint, although this was not a reliable assumption, and Cowley may have been fortunate that the King continued to ‘freeze him out’; others, more culpable in the regicide, received a more drastic punishment.<sup>146</sup>

Cowley presents the the worst of both sides – the Royalists as mercenaries, and the Puritans as hypocrites in what Peter Lake defines as ‘the fatal embrace linking the theatre to the popular pulpit’.<sup>147</sup> The characters are given a more sophisticated and cynical treatment in *Cutter of Coleman Street* than in *The*

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<sup>145</sup> ‘The World Turn’d Upside Down’ was a ballad published on a 1643 broadside protesting against Parliament’s outlawing of traditional Christmas festivities and celebrations in favour of a more sober, religious observance. Sung to the tune of ‘When the King Enjoys His Own Again’, each verse concludes with the lines:

Yet let’s be content, and the times lament,  
You see the world turn’d upside down.

This emotive phrase ‘The World Turn’d Upside Down’ has been adopted by modern scholars as an appropriate shorthand description of the way in which seventeenth-century men and women regarded the events and consequences of the English Civil War. Christopher Hill, in his book *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas during the English Revolution* (London: Penguin, 1972) studied the beliefs of such radical groups as the Diggers, the Ranters, the Levellers and others, and the social and emotional impulses that gave rise to them.

<sup>146</sup> The Act of General Pardon and Oblivion, passed in 1660, pardoned most of the new King’s subjects who had taken the Parliamentary side, on the understanding that they would now be loyal to the Crown. The few who were exempt from this Act included the regicides who had signed his father’s death warrant and implemented his execution. Geoffrey Robinson has given a detailed account of the proceedings by which they were identified, condemned with only a cursory trial, and executed in *The Tyrannicide Brief: The Story of the Man who sent Charles I to the Scaffold* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2005), Chapters 16 and 17, pp 273-307.

<sup>147</sup> Lake and Questier, *The Antichrist’s Lewd Hat*, p.579.

*Guardian*. The tragicomic plot of the original is developed into a sharper topical satire, reflecting a “cross-over” of attitudes both on the part of the author, and the audience he was attempting to please. Like Howard in *The Committee*, Cowley includes a moment which is uncompromisingly and unsubtly propagandist. Lucia’s rejection of her unprepossessing suitors is delivered through a speech which resembles a manifesto for the monarchy:<sup>148</sup>

Go cursed race, which stick your loathsome crimes  
Upon the Honorable Cause and Party;  
And to the Noble Loyal Sufferers,  
A worser suffering add of Hate and Infamy.  
Go to the Robbers and the Parricides,  
And fix your Spots upon their Painted Vizards,  
Not on the Native face of Innocence,  
‘Tis you retard that Industry by which  
Our Country would recover from this sickness,  
Which, whilst it fears th’eruption of such Ulcers,  
Keeps a Disease tormenting it within,  
But if kind Heav’n please to restore our Health,  
When once the great Physician shall return,  
He quickly will I hope restore our Beauty. (1.6.104-117)

The ‘great Physician’ is an edged compliment to Charles II, for it is commonly used as a term for God. Cowley endows Charles I’s son with even greater divinity than that accorded the Christ-like Martyr King. Charles II must be seen to be even greater than his father, and the weight of disappointment felt by his subjects at his “cross-over” from saint to libertine was far greater as a result.

Ironically counterbalancing critics’ attacks against his apparent anti-Royalism, Cowley was also accused of anti-Puritan satire. Cutter pretends to be an ardent Fifth Monarchist in the revised version of the play, his belief in divine visions working to win over the simple Puritan Tabitha:

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<sup>148</sup> Theodore F Kaouk indeed regards her as a symbol of the monarchy itself. (Kaouk, p.36.)

*Cutter:* [...] I know I am to suffer for the Truth.

*Tab:* Not as to death, Brother, if it be his will.

*Cutter:* As to death, Sister, but I shall gloriously return.

*Jolly:* What, Brother, after death? That were miraculous.

*Cutter:* Why the wonder of it is, that it is to be miraculous.

*Jolly:* But Miracles are ceas'd, Brother, in this wicked Age of Cavalierism.

*Cutter:* They are not ceas'd, Brother, nor shall they cease till the Monarchy be establish'd. (3.12.32-29)

Cowley implicitly links both a secular and a divine Monarchy via the resumption of miracles which will prove that the Stuart Monarchy has been restored, and Charles the Martyr will be succeeded by his son 'the second David'.<sup>149</sup> If the re-establishment of the monarchy is the real miracle, then no 'miracles' or predictions carry any truth without the presence of one or other of the Stuarts. His ridicule of the visionary sects, in particular the anti-Royalist Fifth Monarchists, cements his argument.<sup>150</sup> Although Cutter's 'conversion' to Fifth Monarchism is demonstrably false, his words and imagery are shown to be as convincing to others as though he were a genuine adherent. Cowley piles on vision after vision, culminating in a gloriously technicolour Judgment Day which astounds and impresses Cutter's gullible listeners, and which must have evoked laughter from the real audience:

*Cutter:* I say again I am to return, and to return upon a Purple Dromedary, which signifies Magistracy, with an Ax in my hand that is called Reformation, and I am to strike with that Ax upon the Gate of *Westminster-hall*, and cry, Down *Babylon*, and the Building called *Westminster-hall* is to run away and cast it self

<sup>149</sup> Cowley's poem  *Davideis*  specifically casts Charles II as the young boy David who became a great monarch. In public he still received no pardon from the King.

<sup>150</sup> In contemporary eyes the Fifth Monarchists were seen as particularly extremist, and Cowley could rely on his audience to pick up the references: '[...]This night was a bloody Insurrection of some fift-monarchy Enthusiasts, suppressd, & next day examin'd at council; where the wretchedly abused people could say nothing to extenuate their madness, & unwarrantable zeal.' (Evelyn, p.129.)

into the River, and then Major General *Harrison* is to come in Green sleeves from the North upon a Sky-colour'd Mule, which signifies heavenly Instruction.

*Tabitha*: Oh the Father! he's as full of Mysteries as an Egg is full of meat.<sup>151</sup>

*Cutter*: And he is to have a Trumpet in his mouth as big as Steeple, and at the sounding of that Trumpet all the Churches in *London* are to fall down.

*Widow*: O strange, what times shall we see here in poor England!  
(3.12.39-52)

Once Cutter has persuaded Tabitha (in *Cutter* a Fifth Monarchist herself) to marry him, he pulls out his Cavalier costume and puts it back on again. In performance, this would be a strikingly visual, almost ritualistic, moment in both comedies as Cutter declares his allegiance to the King.:

*Tabitha*: What shall I do? I am undone.

*Cutter*: What shalt thou do? Why, thou shalt dance, and sing, and drink, and laugh; thou shalt go with thy breasts open, and thy hair braided; thou shalt put fine black stars upon thy face, and have great bobs for thy ears. Nay, if thou dost begin to look rustily, I'll have thee paint thy face like the Whore of Babylon.<sup>152</sup>

Cutter has reclaimed his persona as a Royalist, and is imposing a new identity upon the Puritan Tabitha. Internal and external shape-changing, shown in performance by characters assuming disguise, is part of a wider theme referred to by Cowley and expanded by Killigrew. Characters possess the ability to step outside and function independently of the play, discussing it with varying degrees

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<sup>151</sup> The reference to the meat of an egg is part of the Fool's joke to Lear in Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1623):

*Fool*: ...Nuncle, give me an egg, and I'll give thee two crowns.

*Lear*: What two crowns shall they be?

*Fool*: Why, after I have cut the egg i'the middle, and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg.

*King Lear*, in *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2005), 1.4.171-174.

<sup>152</sup> *The Guardian*, ed. by A.R. Waller, 5.6, p.230. Also *Cutter of Coleman Street*, ed. by Darlene Johnson Gravett, 5.6, lines 31-37

of interest and sense of the author's control. In *The Guardian* Aurelia and Young Truman reluctantly (and temporarily) agree to a union of convenience:

*Young Truman:* And must we marry then?  
*Aurelia:* It appears so by the story. (5.2.p.220)

The characters are self-consciously aware of their fictionality and feel controlled by the plot. By contrast, Jolly seems unaware that he is fictional, as his remark at the very end of *Cutter* implies:

*Jolly:* .....If my true Brother had come in at last too after his being five Years dead, 'twould ha'been a very Play. (5.3.106-108)

Cowley crosses the line between play-world and real world by using the characters to express their sense of being outside the play to the audience, who *are* outside the play.<sup>153</sup>

In his reworking of his original comedy *The Guardian*, Abraham Cowley has shown the way in which “cross-over” functions as a transformative exercise. *Cutter of Coleman Street* anticipates significant developments in the ‘new’ Restoration comedy. Retaining the sense of topicality found in the comedies of Brome and Shirley, he relates it more closely still to recent events, to the war and its aftermath. References to the Fifth Monarchists lock the action and setting firmly into the 1650s when this fanaticism was at its height. The characters are

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<sup>153</sup> The French dramatist Pierre Corneille explored a similar sense of metatheatricality in *L'Illusion Comique* (1639), first performed at the Hotel de Bourgogne in 1636, which explores the relationship between actors, characters and real people. Corneille argues that life is a theatre, and life imitates art as much as art imitates life. The magician Alcandre and his client Pridamant make use of the actor/spectator relationship, and the two young lovers, Clindor and Isabelle, perform a play within a play in the final act. The confusion between appearance and reality, and between performer and spectator, explores the boundaries between what is real and what is artificial. In Act I, especially, Alcandre's grotto functions as a metaphor for the theatre and its spectators.



shown to have clear motivation for their behaviour and actions, and although in the case of Jolly and Aurelia these did not necessarily make them sympathetic to the audience (as Cowley's defensive *Preface* noted), they are understandable as a product of war-time. *Cutter of Coleman Street* is an anti-war comedy, showing the characters behaving badly because of their need to survive in difficult financial circumstances. But alongside this descriptive writing, Cowley also plays a little with the liminality of stage and audience, and it is this which Thomas Killigrew explores more obviously in *The Parson's Wedding*; the relationships between characters and spectators, between play-world and real-world.

### ***The Parson's Wedding***

In 1641 Thomas Killigrew's comedy was licensed by the Master of the Revels, but – unlike *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon*, a comedy by his counterpart Thomas Jordan which was licensed at the same time – there is no firm evidence that it was actually performed until the Restoration. In any case, as I will show in Chapter Four of this thesis, Jordan's play proved to be more attractive to the actors than Killigrew's, which I suspect was slow to get off the ground, if indeed it was performed at all in 1641. Because in Act 5.2 Killigrew refers to two actors in the King's Company, Joseph Taylor and Stephen Hammerton, this is generally taken by scholars to indicate a performance, but this does not seem to me to be completely convincing. He also refers to the Blackfriars playhouse, and there is a running joke about a play written by "a knight", whom I shall argue later in this chapter is Killigrew's rival, Sir William Davenant, but again this seems to me to be circumstantial evidence, and not conclusive as evidence of performance before

1664. In my view it is significant that *The Parson's Wedding* attracted interest and popularity in the 1660s, mainly through its performance by an all-female cast, an unusual event which might be seen as a gimmick in order to attract publicity and audiences. It seems to have succeeded: on 11 October 1664 Samuel Pepys noted with excitement: 'Luellin... tells me what a bawdy loose play this *parson's wedding* is, that is acted by nothing but women at the Kings house - and I am glad of it.'<sup>154</sup>

In general scholars have tended to dismiss *The Parson's Wedding* as a bawdy romp; depending on the prevalent school of thought, the comedy has been criticised for its obscenity, or praised as a 'loose, lively, bawdy city play.' (Randall, p 2) Others have noted that *The Parson's Wedding* is an 'important precursor of the Restoration comedy of manners'.<sup>155</sup> William R. Keast has defined it as 'a prototype of the new comedy, arguing that Killigrew was indebted to John Donne who "created worldly and disillusioned characters whose urbane manner was expressed in witty, colloquial, and realistic speech [...] later writers of comedy may have found in [the lyric poets], as did Killigrew in Donne, usable examples of 'the conversation of gentlemen' which Dryden declared to be "the true model of wit in comedy".<sup>156</sup> *The Parson's Wedding* does indeed anticipate

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<sup>154</sup> Pepys, *Diary*, v, p.294.

<sup>155</sup> William R Keast cites comments by Katherine M Lynch in *The Social Mode of Restoration Comedy* (New York, 1926), pp 105 – 6; Alfred Harbage in *Cavalier Drama* (New York, 1936), pp 76 – 7; and John Harrington Smith in *The Gay Couple in Restoration Comedy* (Cambridge, Mass 1948), pp 21 – 5. William Keast, 'Killigrew's use of Donne in *The Parson's Wedding*', in *Modern Language Review*, 45. 4 (1950), 512 – 515.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 515. Keast is quoting from Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668), where Dryden discusses Beaumont and Fletcher: '[...]they understood and imitated the conversation of Gentlemen much better [than Shakespeare]; whose wide debaucheries, and quickness of wit in reparties, no Poet before them could

the comic witty dialogue now viewed as an intrinsic aspect of ‘Restoration comedy.’ I will argue, however, that Killigrew’s innovatory contribution to theatre is firstly in his stating of a “manifesto” of a new Restoration society, based on increased sexual freedom, libertinism and wit, although mindful of Wendy Griswold’s warning that ‘Restoration drama reflected class ideology and class divisions, not necessarily class practice’ (Griswold, p. 106). Secondly, Killigrew continues the discussion, initiated by Jonson and Brome, and noted by Cowley, of the relationship between theatricality and reality, and, in particular, develops the idea of the split between char/actor and also the idea of human shape-changing which is later taken up by – amongst others - William Congreve and Charles Dickens.<sup>157</sup>

Bearing in mind that a significant proportion of the audience was female, the play’s popularity may indicate that women as well as men appreciated the all-female cast for *The Parson’s Wedding*. The audiences of the 1660s now expected to see women playing female roles in plays although male actors continued to play the older comic female parts.<sup>158</sup> It was not usual, however, to see an all-

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paint as they have done.’ In *The Works of John Dryden*, gen.ed.H.T.Swedenberg Jr., (California: University of California Press, 1971), xvii, p. 56, ll 25-28.

<sup>157</sup> A version of this section of the thesis forms part of my essay ‘Tradition and Innovation in *The Parson’s Wedding*’, to be published by Ashgate Press in 2013 as part of a collection of essays, working title *Thomas Killigrew and the English Stage: New Perspectives*, edited by Philip Major.

<sup>158</sup> Alison Findley and Stephanie Hodgson-Wright have commented that ‘The closure of the public theatres from 1642 to 1660 had the advantage...of creating a newly-levelled playing field on which to work.’ *Women and Dramatic Production 1550 – 1700*, ed. by Alison Findley and Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, with Gweno Williams, (Harlow: Longman Pearson and Associated Companies, 2000), p. 8. Because of this new equality, the arrival of women on the public stage was perceived as a natural development, not as an innovation, and may have been welcomed by women as an endorsement of their position as managers of their husbands’ property during the Civil War. Sophie Tomlinson has argued that ‘the

female professional cast performing a mixed-sex comedy, and the novelty of this casting paid off; the production ran for several days, and was frequently revived. The decision to cast female actors in male roles warned the audience right from the start to expect the unexpected and to have its assumptions challenged. From his privileged position as friend and favourite of Charles II, Killigrew was setting out a manifesto for the “new” Restoration comedy, recalling the old style of writing in order to sign-post the new.

*The Parson's Wedding* was certainly performed in 1664, and published immediately as part of the collected edition of Killigrew's *Comedies and Tragedies*. We know that the 1664 version of the comedy differs in length from the 1637/41 version, and perhaps reflects Killigrew's sense of the way in which the play was received in performance. In his own annotated copy, Killigrew estimated that he had cut approximately one third of the play (about 1594 lines), pruning the long speeches, but retaining their sense.<sup>159</sup> In Act II a long scene between Captain Buff, Lady Love-all and Jolly is cut in half and each part is

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rupture created by the English Civil Wars, and the discontinuance of an all-male stage, created new opportunities for women to perform and write drama.’ Sophie Tomlinson, *Women on Stage in Stuart Drama*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005) p. 156. Tomlinson has shown how the court actresses such as the queens themselves, Anna of Denmark and Henrietta Maria, eased the passage of the professional actresses onto the public stage, and concludes that the professional actresses introduced a more sardonic tone, which fitted well with the cynicism of the Restoration society.

<sup>159</sup> William Van Lennep has discussed the changes in detail. Killigrew annotated his own copy: ‘I have cut out 855 lines this day – May 2, 1664’ and later ‘1594 lines is now cut out [...] May 5 – 1664’. William Van Lennep, ‘Thomas Killigrew prepares his Plays for Production’ in *Joseph Quincy Adams Memorial Studies* ed. by James G McManaway, Giles E Dawson and Edwin E Willoughby, (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1948), p. 803-808.

placed on either side of the existing scene between Wanton and the Bawd.<sup>160</sup>

Other than that, the texts before and after the Interregnum remain essentially the same. Killigrew, like Cowley, downplays the message of platonic love and friendship which characterised the courts of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, and develops the theme of sexual love outside marriage which characterised the court of their son, Charles II.

Women continue to be portrayed as sexually insatiable; their new independence in society has encouraged their lustful and unstable urges. Rather than openly endorsing Charles II's libertinism, Killigrew shifts the blame onto the Puritans for the disappearance of the platonic loving friendships encouraged by Henrietta Maria, but which in fact had no part in the 'new' Restoration society:

*Pleasant:* Lord, aunt, there will be no going without [a platonic lover] this summer into the country. Pray let's enquire for one, either a he-one to entertain us or a she-one to tell us the story of her love. 'Tis excellent to bed-ward, and makes one as drowsie as prayers.

*Widow:* Faith, niece, this parliament has so destroyed 'em, and the Platonic humour, that 'tis uncertain whether we shall get one or no. Your leading members in the lower house have so cowed the ladies that they have no leisure to breed any of late. Their whole endeavours are spent now in feasting, and winning close committeemen, a rugged kind of sullen fellows, with implacable stomachs and hard hearts.<sup>161</sup>

These lines, heard by the audience at Charles I's court, form a critique of the monarchy and it is surprising that they were allowed in a world where the

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<sup>160</sup> A character named 'Jolly' appears in *The Parson's Wedding*, as well as *Cutter of Coleman Street*. It is perhaps possible that the naming was deliberate and intended to link the plays together, and may have been a satire on Davenant and Killigrew's erstwhile rival George Jolly.

<sup>161</sup> Thomas Killigrew, *The Parson's Wedding*, in *Six Caroline Plays*, ed. by A.S. Knowland, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), V.ii, p. 533. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

Stuart kings took a ‘hands-on’ approach to play-writing.<sup>162</sup> Was this a way in which Charles allowed criticism of the neo-Platonism introduced by his wife Henrietta Maria? To an audience at Charles II’s court, the critique is less severe, and may have represented an endorsement of the new, more worldly, post-war Restoration society.

Killigrew’s decision to use an all-female cast playing male and female roles, with its titillating visual performance of “girls on girls”, offers a response to the more familiar pre-Restoration practice of men impersonating women. This is also a “cross-over” casting: female performers were replacing male, not only in roles which they were entitled to play on grounds of their gender, but also usurping the stage which had always been a male domain. In the Prologue to the first performance in October 1664, Rebecca Marshall, in the leading role of the Captain, delivered a rebuke to the male actors:

We with our Poet have prevail’d again,  
To give us our Revenge upon the men...  
‘Twas not our crime, the house so long lay still,  
When e’re we play not, ‘tis against our will.  
We could have acted, could but they have joyn’d...  
And now they quarrel when they cannot play.<sup>163</sup>

The professional male actors are excluded from the playing space, whilst the professional female actors exult in their presence on the stage. Significantly the Prologue suggests that women would have gladly appeared when the male

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<sup>162</sup> Charles I advised Shirley in some improvements to *The Gamester*, and Kevin Sharpe has noted that Charles I demanded that Massinger remove a passage from *The King and the Subject* (1638) which implied an unconstitutional method of raising money, which might have reflected upon his own methods of imposing taxes at short notice. Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment*, p 295.

<sup>163</sup> Thomas Killigrew, *The Parson’s Wedding*, (London, 1664) in *Restoration Comedies: The Parson’s Wedding, The London Cuckolds, & Sir Courtly Nice, or, It Cannot Be*, ed Montague Summers (London: Jonathan Cape, 1921), Prologue, 3-4, 7-9, 12.

actors were banned from acting: ‘’Twas not our crime, the house so long lay still’.

The Prologue also implies some opposition on the part of the male players to female actors (‘we could have acted, could but they have joyn’d’), but that now ‘they quarrel when they cannot play.’ Killigrew endorses the presence of women on the public stage, refuting antitheatrical fears that the sight of a boy playing a female role might incite homosexual desire on the part of the spectator. The argument of the Epilogue (also spoken by Marshall) acknowledges the deliberately heterosexual casting within Charles II’s playhouses:

When boys play’d women’s parts, you’d think the Stage,  
Was innocent in that untempting Age.  
No: for your amorous Fathers then, like you,  
Amongst those Boys had Play-house Misses too [...]  
Now, to oppose the humour of that Age,  
We have this day, expell’d our Men the Stage.  
Why cannot we as well perform their Parts? (1 – 4, 11-13)

Killigrew’s use of an all-female cast was a development of the tradition of private Court theatricals, and links the public stage more obviously with the King as Charles II and his court came into the playhouses to see the plays which they had sometimes requested.<sup>164</sup> The “cross-over” casting now took another form; Royal amateur actresses who had taken roles in the private Court theatricals were now watching their professional counterparts on the public stage.

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<sup>164</sup> On 26 February 1662/3, Charles II wrote to Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery: ‘I will now tell you that I have read your first play, which I like very well, and doe intend to bring it upon the Stage, as soon as my Company have their new Stage, in order, that the Seanes may be worthy the works they are to set forth.’ This first play may have been *The Generall*, performed by the King’s Company in September 1664, and was the result of a debate at court over whether English plays could successfully use rhymed verse. *The Dramatic Works of Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery*, ed. by William Smith Clark, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1937), I, p. 26.

Killigrew's casting, unusual in itself, is more daring than it at first appears. *The Parson's Wedding* includes frankly salacious and sexually explicit exchanges, which gain added *frisson* when uttered by women. In Act III the Captain imagines how he might "cook" a 'bird of paradise' - a young virgin:

*Captain:* A girl of fifteen, smooth as satin, white as her Sunday apron, plump, and of the first down. I'll take her with her guts in her belly and warm her with a country dance or two, then pluck her and lay her dry betwixt a couple of sheets; then pour into her so much oil of wit as will make her turn to a man, and stick into her heart three corns of whole love, to make her taste of what she is doing; then, having strewed a man all over her, shut the door and leave us – we'll work ourselves into such a sauce as you can never surfeit on, so poynant and yet no hogough. Take heed of a hogough; your onion and woman make the worst sauce. This shook together by an English cook (for your French seasoning spoils many a woman), and there's a dish for a king. (III.ii, p.490)<sup>165</sup>

Sexual arousal and intercourse is metaphorically likened to preparing and cooking a chicken (although the penetrative action of basting or skewering the chicken is not described, it is implicit throughout). This "recipe" is designed to titillate the audience, and having the lines spoken by an actress introduces a variation on the sexual theme. Killigrew is not exploring a Sapphic relationship, but is presenting a woman "talking dirty". This effect is more in line with the depiction of women making love to each other for the benefit of the male voyeur, despite significant female presence in the Restoration audience. Killigrew's overt appeal to the men

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<sup>165</sup>Thomas Shadwell imitates this effect in his comedy *The Woman-Captain* (1680), where, in I i, the sensualist Sir Humphry Scattergood compiles a long list of culinary delights, some of which are clearly aphrodisiacal: 'heightening Sturgeon to sir up my blood, provoking Oysters, and the lusty Lobster... and dissolved Pearl and Amber in my sawce.' He also salivates over 'the young plump Partridge', 'pullets', 'sucking Rabbits', and 'young fat Beefs.' Thomas Shadwell, *The Woman Captain in The Complete Works of Thomas Shadwell* ed.by Montague Summers (London: Fortune Press, 1927), I.1 ( IV, p.22).. The word 'hogough' in Killigrew's passage is a corruption of '*haut goute*', or 'seasoning', with an inference of venereal disease. Defined in Gordon Williams's *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature* (London and Atlantic Highlands: Athlone Press, 1994), I, p. 648.



may be read either as a compliment to the women, in implying that they would not find such blatant sexual fantasy so entertaining, but it might also be read as a challenging assertion of male supremacy – the actress might be allowed to perform in the playhouse, but only as long as she fulfilled her role as a subservient object of desire for the enjoyment of male spectators.

Continuing this theme, in his definition of the terms and conditions of the new Restoration society, Killigrew restates a patriarchal view of women. After having played a powerful leadership role during the Civil War, women are now mocked; for as Aparna Dhadwadker has noted, ‘The royalist playwrights[... ] ridicule as antifeminine the very practices which feminism considers liberating in Puritanism.’<sup>166</sup> A female surgeon, Lady Freedom, is satirised as practising her craft purely for sexual purposes:

*Jolly:* She converses with naked men, and handles all their members though never so ill affected and calls the fornication charity. All her discourse to me was flat bawdry, which I could not chide, but spoke as flat as she, still she rebuked me, calling mine beastliness, and hers, natural philosophy. (I.iii, p.451)

The status of the woman healer in early modern England was ambivalent, as Sujata Iyengar describes; the idea of a woman ‘Handling Soft the Hurts’ of male and female patients played into the hands of critics who accused them of being not doctors but wantons.<sup>167</sup> Killigrew implies there is little difference between Lady Freedom and the Captain’s Wanton in this play. He may have been

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<sup>166</sup> Dhadwadker, ‘The Comedy of Dispossession’, p.432.

<sup>167</sup> Sujata Iyengar, “‘Handling Soft the Hurts’: Sexual Healing and Manual Contact in *Orlando Furioso*, *The Faerie Queene*, and *All’s Well That Ends Well*”, in *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Elizabeth D Harvey, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 39-91.

joining contemporaries in satirising the Duchess of Newcastle; Lady Freedom's 'natural philosophy' recalls Margaret Cavendish's treatises on science and philosophy, and Cavendish was seen as eccentric by contemporaries including the King himself.<sup>168</sup> In this way Killigrew brings a 'real' element into his fantasy world, by "tagging" a real living person within his play. By portraying her as sexually available and promiscuous, and sabotaged professionally by her male rivals, Killigrew trivialises the image of the independent woman who might upset the smooth return of Restoration patriarchy:

*Sadd*: She is successful, and that spoils her, and makes her deaf to counsel. I bade him poison two or three, to disgrace her, for the vanity and pride of their remedies make those women more diligent than their charity.  
(I.iii,p.452)

Despite at times resorting to traditional misogynist attacks, Killigrew's comedy explores new ground in its very specific definition of the wit by which the characters operate, and who actually possesses it. The most influential wit is the King himself; Killigrew locates him in a suitably witty environment with his pun on Charles II's official residence, the palace of W(h)it(e)hall:

*Wanton*: ...I tell thee, a fool that has money is the man. The wits and the we's, - which is a distinct parreal of wit bound by it self, and to be sold at Wit-hall, or at the sign of the King's Head in the Butchery. (II.iii, p. 466 )

Killigrew defines wit as a male possession: in the *Dramatis Personae*

Careless is 'a gentleman, and a wit', while Wild is 'A Gentleman', Jolly a 'humorous gentleman' (not a wit) and 'a courtier'. The Captain is 'a leading wit,

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<sup>168</sup> When 'a cruel practical joke led an aristocratic lady to appear at the gates of Whitehall dressed as a Babylonian princess[...]Charles II reflected for some minutes, and then said: 'I bet it is the Duchess of Newcastle.'" Quoted from the *Memoirs of the Count de Gramont* by Count Anthony Hamilton, ed.by Henry Vizetelly (London, 1889), by Katie Whitaker, in *Mad Madge*, p. 300.

full of designs', the Parson is 'a wit also, but over-reached by the *Captain*, and his *Wanton*'. By contrast, Constant and Sadd are 'two dull suitors' whose constant devotion to Lady Wild, 'a rich (and somewhat youthful) *Widow*', and her niece Mrs Pleasant, is regarded as a failing. Killigrew expresses this criticism through the women themselves, who regard their suitors with contempt:

*Widow*: ...mine is such a sad soul, and tells me stories of lovers that dy'd in despair, and of the lamentable end of their mistresses (according to the ballad) and thinks to win me by example.

*Pleasant*: Faith mine talks of nothing but how long he has lov'd me; and those that know me not,<sup>169</sup> think I am old, and still finds new causes (as he calls them) for his love; I ask'd him the other day if I chang'd so fast or no. (I.ii, p.446)

Significantly, although in practice they are shown to be equal to, and sometimes more witty than the male characters, none of the women are specifically identified as wits. Instead their power is defined in terms of their commercial value. Killigrew's inference is that women do not need wit, a weapon of survival, because they have money and estates for which the male characters compete. In Restoration comedy, wit is a weapon owned by the dispossessed.

By using the character of the Captain's whore, *Wanton*, to argue in favour of the restoration of a patriarchal society, Killigrew cleverly manipulates a female representative, who might be expected to speak on behalf of women's independence, to reject it. *Wanton* represents women who lack status and security, who are outside society's protection. She has a quick mind – she devises the Parson's false Wedding, and a new law which (with twisted logic) endorses

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<sup>169</sup> In his edition of the play, Montague Summers has 'now' for 'not' but the original printed text, and also A.S.Knowland's edition retains 'not'. Summers's amendment makes sense as an argument by Pleasant's suitor (Sadd) that the passage of time means that she now looks older, but equally the original use of 'not' works, in indicating that Sadd's friends think his mistress must be old because he has pursued her for so long.

sexual immorality and adultery. Wanton's proposed law is that adultery should be punishable by death – not for moral reasons, but for kindness. She believes that as a result people will think twice before bringing accusations of adultery: 'One rogue hang'd, for example would make a thousand kind girls.' (IV.i.p.509)

Through Wanton, Killigrew promotes a manifesto of sexual tolerance and *laissez-faire* for which Charles II was becoming notorious.

Wanton argues that 'now were the time to bring wenching to that perfection, no age could ever have hoped. Now you may sow such seed of pleasure, you may be prayed for hereafter.' (IV.i. p.508) In the Charles II / Killigrew manifesto, this is also an opportunity to re-feminise women and, by implication, for women to reject their unseemly "male" independence:

*Wanton*:...Then we may go in petticoats again; for women grew imperious and wore the breeches only to fright the poor cuckolds, and make the fools digest their horns (IV.i.p.509)

In a mixed Restoration cast, the frequent plot device of putting the heroine in breeches exposed the female performer to the male gaze, empowered by her male attire but disempowered by her "real" gender identity.<sup>170</sup> In an all-female cast, women performed men from necessity (as in the pre-Civil War all-male casts), but the [fe]male power invested in the female performer was permanent rather than temporary within the performance of the play. In this first performance of *The Parson's Wedding*, power was not a temporary gift to the female character via her assumption of male clothing, nor did it disappear during the play as a result of her taking off her male attire. It could therefore be argued that Killigrew,

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<sup>170</sup> As discussed by Elizabeth Howe in *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama, 1660 – 1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), and by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in *Between Men: English and Male Homosocial Desire*.

far from trying to put women back into their place in a patriarchal society, was paying them a compliment and implying their continued power and influence. But the implicit message of *The Parson's Wedding*, if performed with a mixed-gender cast as originally intended, does not support this theory. Effectively, the use of an all-female cast has blurred Killigrew's original patriarchal argument, although it helps to endorse the impression of the libertine, sexually free, society which appealed to the Restoration audience. In this way, "cross-over" is not transformative *of* circumstances, but transformed *by* circumstances.

Killigrew's use of the all-female cast for *The Parson's Wedding* was proof of a sound theatrical sense of what would work in performance. His understanding of the liminal relationship between [char]actor and audience is an important feature of the play.

The self-conscious presentation of the imaginary playhouse within the real playhouse was a frequent device within Jacobean and Caroline comedies. Shakespeare uses it in *The Taming of the Shrew* (1593/4), for example, as well as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1594). Sir Francis Beaumont's *Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607) depicts the citizens George and Nell and their apprentice Rafe watching and commenting on the action onstage, seeming to speak on behalf of the real audience. A development of this device occurs when George and Nell send Rafe up on stage to play the lead in the play within a play. George and Nell are confident in their status as audience, and in their control of the material performed on stage – if they do not approve, they can call for it to be altered. In the Induction to Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), the Stage-Keeper introduces the actors to the audience, again offering a self-referential theatrical

bridge of the gap between the play-world of Jonson's comedy and the real world of the spectators. In *The Devil is an Ass* (performed 1616, published 1631), the character of Alderman Fitzdottrel describes his attendance at the real Blackfriars Playhouse, his lines spoken by one of the actors who would have performed at Blackfriars:

*Fitzdottrel*: [...]Today I go to the Blackfriars play-house,  
 Sit in the view, salute all my acquaintance,  
 Rise up between the acts, let fall my cloke,  
 Publish a handsome man, and a rich suit,  
 As that's a special end why we go thither,  
 All that pretend to stand for't on the stage:  
 The ladies ask, who's that? For they do come  
 To see us, love, as we do to see them.<sup>171</sup>

Fitzdottrel is on show, in his fictional world as a character in Jonson's play, and also in his embodiment on the public stage as portrayed by a (human) actor. Killigrew echoes Jonson's play on worlds; in *The Parson's Wedding*, characters talk about going to the playhouse, and enthuse about a play they have just 'seen' offstage.<sup>172</sup> As part of their plot to fool the Parson, one of the characters, Jolly, brings the music from a play they have heard performed at the real playhouse in Blackfriars: 'I have got the *Black-fryers* Musick; I was fain to stay until the last Act'.<sup>173</sup> As part of another scheme, the Captain reserves a box at 'the Fryers' to see the new play. At the end of the play the characters refer to events taking place in their own offstage world, the 'real' world of the audience.

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<sup>171</sup> Ben Jonson, *The Devil is an Ass*, ed. by Anthony Parr, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, gen. eds. David Bevington, Martin Butler and Ian Donaldson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1.6.31-38, IV, pp. 500-501.

<sup>172</sup> *Widow*: ...Niece, now if we could be rid of these troublesome Lovers too, we would go see a Play. [...]

*Secret*: Pray Madam go, they say 'tis a fine Play, and a Knight writ it. Thomas Killigrew, *The Parson's Wedding*, ed. Knowland, III.i, p. 64, 65.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, IV.i, p. 87.

Again, in the Induction to Jonson's *The Staple of News* (performed 1625, published 1631), interrupting the Prologue's opening speech, four gentlewomen enter onto the stage and demand to be seated. In the original staging, before actresses were to play the roles, their appearance would have acquired an extra level of meaning; four actors are playing women, their outward appearance belying their real gender. The women are spectators of the play, providing a link between the real world of the audience and the fictional world of the actors; this is emphasised by their seating on stools on the stage in full view of the audience – a part but yet not a part, of the play itself. Jonson also satirises the critics (in a way which modern playwrights might enjoy); the women are 'Gossips', named 'Mirth', 'Tattle', 'Expectation' and 'Censure'. Rather than paying serious attention to the play, Gossip Mirth announces, "we are persons of quality, I assure you, and women of fashion, and come to see and to be seen."<sup>174</sup>

Echoing Jonson, Killigrew's characters in *The Parson's Wedding* inhabit the play world of the actors, and the real world of the audience, with equal ease. Lady Love-all claims to be furious that she has been the subject of gossip: 'Villain, to bring my name upon the Stage, for a subject of his quarrel'.<sup>175</sup> A fictional character is protesting about being discredited on the stage, for the world of the stage is as real to them and they to it as though they were a real person, using the stage as a metaphor for 'the public domain'. On another level, Lady Love-all's lines are spoken by an imaginary character, describing 'a stage within a

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<sup>174</sup> Ben Jonson, *The Staple of News* (1631), ed. by Joseph Loewenstein, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, gen. eds. David Bevington, Martin Butler and Ian Donaldson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), VI p.19, Induction, 7-8.

<sup>175</sup> Thomas Killigrew, *The Parson's Wedding*, ed. Summers, II ii, p. 37.

stage', but the character is voiced by a real person, an actress in Killigrew's company. Both worlds are therefore the real world, and, by inference, both worlds are the artificial world.

Alan Richard Botica suggests that the comic dramatists 'sought to introduce an element of uncertainty into the performance and its reception, by disrupting the integrity of the theatrical illusion... to disturb and sometimes break the boundaries between audience and play.'<sup>176</sup> Charles Whitney has commented on 'the crucial early modern meta-theatrical awareness of the difference between actor and role... the engagement with characters is deepened rather than dissipated by meta-theatrical awareness of the player as a player.' (Whitney, p. 68) Lady Love-all and the other characters do not distinguish the real audience from their fictional selves; the actors are the mediators between the characters they portray and the audience. The last few lines of *The Parson's Wedding* show this easy blend of fictional and real worlds, as the char-actors are impatient to conclude the play and move offstage:

*Lady Love-all:* ...pray dispatch what 'tis you have to say to this noble company that I may be gone, for those gentlemen will be in such fury if I stay, and think, because we are alone God knows what.

*Captain:* 'Tis no matter what they think; 'tis not them we are to study now: but these guests, to whom pray address yourself civilly and beg that they would please to become fathers and give those brides within - What say you, gentlemen? Will you lend your hands to join them? The match, you see, is made. If you refuse, Stephen misses the wench and then you cannot justly blame the poet. For, you know, they say that alone is enough to spoil the play. (V.iv. p. 553)

'Stephen' is the actor Stephen Hammerton, a former boy actor and female impersonator. 'Missing the wench' may therefore mean failing in his bit to

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<sup>176</sup> Botica, 'Audience, Playhouse, Play in Restoration Theatre 1660-1710', p. 244.



convince the audience that he is a woman, rather than failing to secure his mistress. In performance by an all-female cast, this gains extra resonance as the female actors seek to convince the audience that they are men. ‘These guests’ refer to the characters who are offstage in the play-world, and whom Love-all likes to believe are impatiently awaiting her return. But they may also be the “real-life” gentlemen who, having seen the play, now wait for the actresses in the room behind the stage. However, if the audience refuses to applaud, then the Epilogue predicts that the play will end without a happy marriage, and it will be spoiled. The onus is upon the audience: Killigrew takes no responsibility for their lack of appreciation.

I have commented on the way in which putting an actress into breeches functioned in the Restoration playhouse as a temporary signal of male authority, which was effectively negated by the all-female casting in this comedy. But Killigrew is even more interested in the way in which the physical body is enhanced or diminished by its clothes, to the point of being constructed by them. His ideas may have been partly influenced by the blurring of the distinction between the human and the inhuman in the Induction to Ben Jonson’s *The Staple of News*, where Gossip Mirth’s disparaging description of the author objectifies him as a broken drum, a useless instrument of sound:

*Mirth*: [...] his actors will abuse him enough, or I am deceived. Yonder he is within (I was i' the tiring-house awhile to see the actors dressed) [...] He doth sit like an unbraced drum with one of his heads beaten out. For that you must note; a poet hath two heads, as a drum has, one for making, the other repeating, and his repeating head is all to pieces - they may gather it up i' the tiring-house - for he hath torn the book in a poetical fury and put himself to silence in dead sack [...] <sup>177</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Ben Jonson, *The Staple of News* (1631), ed. by Joseph Loewenstein, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, gen. eds. David Bevington,

Killigrew develops this objectification of a person, exploring how their ability to exist is controlled by outward appearance. When Lady Love-all takes off her attire and prepares for bed, therefore, Killigrew describes how her clothes contain her; without them she loses part of her self, both mentally and physically.

*Wanton*:...She is a thing wears out her limbs as fast as her clothes, one that never goes to bed at all, nor sleeps in a whole skin, but is taken to pieces like a motion, as if she were too long...

*Captain*:...I peeped once to see what she did before she went to bed. By this light, her maids were dissecting her; and when they had done, they brought some of her to bed, and the rest they either pinned or hung up, and so she lay dismembered till morning; in which time, her chamber was strewed all over like an anatomy school. (IV.i.p.506)

Killigrew sets up the idea for the fluidity of characters, in his suggestion of a physical spilling out of the human frame, and plays with the question of identity and how far a character is the thing they seem to be. The philosopher Thomas Hobbes, a friend of Davenant, asserted ‘[...] seeing life is but a motion of Limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principall part within; why may we not say, that all Automata (Engines that move themselves by springs and wheelles as doth a watch) have an artificial life?’<sup>178</sup> Lady Love-all is clearly in an advanced state of motion, wearing out not only her clothes, but even her limbs; she is personified as

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Martin Butler and Ian Donaldson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), VI, p.21, Induction, 49-58.

<sup>178</sup>Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London, n.pub.,1651), Introduction, p.29. <<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/3207>> [accessed 9 August 2012]. Davenant and Hobbes embarked on a discussion of literary criticism in *A Discourse on Gondibert* (1650 /1), which the poet dedicated to “his most honour’d friend Mr Hobs”. *The Answer of Mr Hobbes to Sr. Will.D’Avenant’s Preface before Gondibert* (1651) countered Davenant’s argument for the enhancing qualities of poetry, asserting that poetry was necessarily an inferior copy of life, since it could only evoke feelings and responses towards an imagined moment, rather than those experienced in a real situation.

a ‘Jugler’s Motion’, a machine, not a person.<sup>179</sup> ‘motion’ also means fluctuation, and implies fluidity, and Lady Love-all, in the Captain’s description, spills out over the bed; she is impossible to contain in one piece and so has to be hung up around the room until the morning when she can be packed up into her clothes again and resume her apparent body. Killigrew’s depersonalisation and objectification of the ‘human’ character is immediately echoed by William Congreve’s portrait of Lady Wishfor’t in *The Way of the World*.<sup>180</sup>

At the end of the play, as is traditional, the characters step out of character to perform the Epilogue, joking about the character of the author – part real and part at the mercy of his creations. The actor speaking the Epilogue comes out of character, addressing the audience not as himself but as a representative and advocate for the author. The Epilogue is to be entrusted to a suitable person, often the title role of the play. In this case the Parson, furious at his gulling, refuses:

*Captain:* Prithee Jack, stay, and say something to the gentlemen by way of epilogue. Thou art a piece of scurvy poet thyself; prithee oblige the author and give us a line or two in praise of his play.

*Parson:* I oblige him? Hang him and all his friends and hurt no body! Yes, I’m likely to speak for him! You see how I ha’ been used today betwixt you. I shall find a time to be revenged. (V.iv.p.551)

In the context of the comedy, I suggest that it is clear that the author targetted is not the real author Thomas Killigrew, but his rival Sir William

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<sup>179</sup> A juggler’s motion is nowadays a swing with a pendulum as shown at <http://www.blindjuggler.org/the-swinging-blind-juggler/>

<sup>180</sup> Lady Wishfor’t in Congreve’s *The Way of the World* (1700) complains about the ‘cracks’ in her painted face – ‘I look like an old peel’d Wall’ (3.5.72). She scolds the servant, Peg – ‘Why dost thou not stir, Puppet? thou wooden Thing upon Wires.’ (3.1.15-16) William Congreve, *The Way of the World* in *The Works of William Congreve*, ed. by D.F. McKenzie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), II p. 154, 148. Killigrew also anticipates the enjoyment of the grotesque by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novelists such as Laurence Sterne and Charles Dickens.

Davenant. Earlier in the plot, the gallant, Careless, has suggested a trip to see the latest play. His friends are enthusiastic

*Jolly:* On my word this is held the best penned of the time, and he has writ a very good play; By this day, it was extremely applauded.

*Captain:* Does he write plays by the day? Indeed a man would ha judged him a labouring poet.

*Jolly:* A labouring poet? By this hand he's a knight. Upon my recommendation venture to see it; hang me if you be not extremely well satisfied.

*Careless:* A knight and write plays? It may be, but it's strange to us. So they say there are other gentlemen poets without land or Latin, this was not ordinary. Prithee when was he knighted?

*Jolly:* In the north; the last great knighting, when 'twas God's great mercy we were not all knights. (III.ii.p.491)

Davenant survived the first Civil War in the North under the command of the northern landowner and playwright William Cavendish, then Marquess of Newcastle, before leaving in August 1643 to go to Oxford to join Henrietta Maria, and from there to Gloucester, where he was knighted by Charles I.<sup>181</sup> Although it is not certain that the satire is directed against him, neither can it be certainly directed against Killigrew himself as an act of self-deprecation, for – perhaps surprisingly – he was never knighted. I would question whether Killigrew would have remembered the exact date of Davenant's knighting; it is more likely that he remembered that it had happened at around the time of Davenant's going to fight in the North. This thinly veiled attack therefore enables him to fictionalise Davenant as a character in his comedy - controlling the real Davenant in his fantasy London world, although he was unable to do so in actual life. As part of the fantasy, Davenant can be affected by the actions of other characters within the

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<sup>181</sup> In Chapter Three of this thesis I discuss Davenant's contribution to "cross-over" comedy in greater detail.

play - the Parson is able to threaten to discredit him offstage, for example, because Davenant and he are interrelated through their involvement onstage.

The Captain himself, in another sly dig at Davenant, whose nose had been rotted by syphilis, wears a nose patch.<sup>182</sup> The reason for this is carefully glossed over:

*Jolly*: ...And faith, Jack, (to be a little free) tell me, dost thou not think thou hadst been as well to pass here with that English nose thou carryed'st hence as with the French tongue thou hast brought home?

*Captain*: It is an accident, and to a soldier 'tis but a scar. (I.iii.p.456)

In linking the Captain with Davenant, Killigrew accuses his rival of being - like the character - 'full of designs' (*Dramatis Personae*). The plots and trickery the Captain employs throughout the play become ever wilder, perhaps in the same way that Davenant's schemes seemed ever more outrageous to his contemporaries.<sup>183</sup>

Once the Captain puts on the Parson's cloak to speak the Epilogue, he (or she in the 1664 production) assumes another character entirely. Pursued by his rejected mistress Lady Love-all, he is able to hold her off by pointing out his change of clothes. Traditionally the actor speaking the Epilogue put on a black

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<sup>182</sup> To his contemporaries, Davenant's deformity was a source of constant amusement, for example in Sir John Suckling's satirical poem *The Wits* (*A Session of the Poets* c. 1637), Davenant is shown in attendance:

*Will. Davenant* asham'd of a foolish mischance

That he had got lately traveling *in France*,

Modestly hoped the handsomnesse of 's Muse

Might any deformity about him excuse...

But in all their Records either in Verse or Prose,

There was not one Laureate without a nose. (41 – 44, 47, 48)

<sup>183</sup> Amongst his schemes, Davenant was imprisoned for his involvement in the Army Plot of 1641, but later pardoned. In 1650 he was captured by Cromwell's forces as he set sail to colonise the Americas - and imprisoned again. A detailed account is given by John Stubbs in *Reprobates: The Cavaliers of the English Civil War*.

cloak over his costume in order to step out of his character. The cloak becomes a threshold over which Lady Love-all cannot cross over to her lover.

*Captain:* Alas, you mistake me, madam, I am Epilogue now; the Captain's Within. And as a friend I counsel you not to incense the gentlemen against the poet, for he knows all your story; and if you anger him he'll put it in a play. (V.iv.p.552)

The Captain is indeed 'within' the figure of the Epilogue, concealed by the Parson's cloak. Killigrew continues to play with identity – if the Captain is wearing the Parson's cloak, is he in fact the Epilogue, or is he the Parson speaking the Epilogue? Whose views are expressed – those of the Parson or those of Epilogue, or those of the author? And who *is* the author – Killigrew or his fictional author, his real rival Davenant? If the 'author' is Davenant, then 'his' lines are spoken by a voice whose identity remains unclear: the Captain who has turned into the Parson who has turned into the Epilogue. In the 1664 production, moreover, these male roles are taken not by men but by women, adding to the sense of unreality. This sense of uncertainty perhaps reflects Davenant's own ability to shift-shape in his career, moving from Henrietta Maria's court favourite, to Commonwealth reformer of the theatre, to Charles II's theatre manager and impresario.

The Epilogue advises Lady Love-all on the best way to treat his "real" character, the Captain, in order that he shall not turn against the real figure of Killigrew, now a fictionalized character in his own play. The ease with which characters interact with real people shows in the Captain's advice to Lady Love-all that she should persuade the fictional Parson to write a comedy, literally a play within a play. This is to be the Parson's revenge on the author who has humiliated

him in the action of *The Parson's Wedding*. But Killigrew's sustained satirical attack on Davenant also enables him to sidestep his identity as the true author of the play:

*Captain*:...If you can prevail with [the Parson] to express his anger in some satiric comedy (for the knave has wit and they say his genius lies that way), tell him 'tis expected he should be revenged upon the illiterate courtier that made this play. If you can bring this business about, I may find a way, as Epilogue to be thankful, though the Captain abused you today. ( V.iv.p. 552)

As the Parson gains human life by being impersonated by a real actor, Davenant, the character of a comedy, becomes a fiction. There is a further in-joke in the comment about the 'illiterate courtier': the gibe could be intended against either Killigrew or Davenant. The aristocratic pretence of illiteracy was a traditional self-deprecating line, and Killigrew was known to have poor literacy.<sup>184</sup> However, Davenant, son of the landlord of the "Crown" at Oxford, was a grammar-school boy who had worked hard to acquire courtly manners and breeding by becoming page to various aristocrats before ending up as one of Henrietta Maria's court favourites.<sup>185</sup> It is possible, then, that the nobly-born Killigrew was continuing to mock his lower-born rival.

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<sup>184</sup> Killigrew "lived his life a comparatively uneducated man" according to Alfred Harbage in *Thomas Killigrew: Cavalier Dramatist, 1612-83* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930), p. 44. Harbage quotes Antony a Wood's comment in *Atheniae Oxoniensis* IV, p 692: "Thomas Killigrew [was] not educated at any university (and therefore wanted some learning to poise his excellent natural parts)". Killigrew's detractor Richard Flecknoe attacked him in his *Life of Tomaso the Wanderer* (1667) as 'he would needs be writing, though he could not spell, and be an Author, without *Rhyme* or *Reason*; and without any other learning, then only that of *vice* and *debaucherie*.' (p.4).

<sup>185</sup> Davenant arrived in London aged sixteen, and found himself a position in the Duchess of Richmond's retinue. Accounts of his early life are found in biographies by Paul Bordinat, *Sir William Davenant* (Boston: Twayne, 1981); Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant* (Manchester: Manchester University

Killigrew's answer to his question "At what point do characters in a play become real, and at what point do real people become characters?" is that the actors give life to the characters, and enable them to interact in a play-world. The figure of the author, however, becomes less real, an offstage and invisible figure controlled by and at the mercy of his characters. Killigrew takes control of his rival and writes him out, destroying him fictionally in a way which he could not do in real life.

Both Abraham Cowley and Thomas Killigrew were iconoclastic writers who challenged the assumptions of their audiences through their "cross-over" comedies. Cowley dealt with cutting-edge topics which his audience could engage with, and challenged their perceptions of human nature as essentially good. Cowley's anti-idealism undercuts Davenant's attempt to show that, as Kevin Sharpe has suggested, 'To a world of the 1620s and 1630s that had come to suspect that survival and advancement depended upon cunning and dissimulation, Davenant proclaimed that the good man was still the good citizen and the good ruler'.<sup>186</sup> Cowley argues that men survive by doing the expedient thing rather than the right thing. Whatever the strength of their moral character, external circumstances oblige them to survive by their wits, and *Cutter of Coleman Street* offers a grittily realistic portrait of people struggling to do just that.<sup>187</sup> *The Parson's Wedding* presents a manifesto of the new King's court, declaring an end to platonic courtly love and offering a less sacred view of marriage in a newly

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Press, 1987); A.H.Nethercot, *Sir William Davenant; Poet Laureate and Playwright-Manager* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967); and most recently John Stubbs in *Reprobates*.

<sup>186</sup> Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment*, p. 61.

<sup>187</sup> Davenant discusses this theme in his cross-over comedy *The Wits* (1636), revived in 1661.



unconstrained society where men and women could enjoy sexual freedom within and without the confines of wedlock. In the work of both, love and friendship are replaced with franker forms of sexual desire more characteristic of the court of Charles II. But Cowley and Killigrew also pose teasing questions about identity, fantasy and reality, reflecting the instability of the exiled society and challenging commonwealth conventions. Finally, the emergence of Wit as a new tool characterises their new form of comedy. It emerges, with important consequences, in reworked comedies which “cross-over” the civil war divide.

### Chapter Three: Rewriting literary history

Sir William Davenant, rather than Thomas Killigrew, has tended to attract most scholarly critical interest, as a fascinating character in a society increasingly in thrall to the cult of personality. The subject of biographies by Alfred Harbage and Mary Edmond, and critical analyses by Kevin Sharpe and John Stubbs,<sup>188</sup>

Davenant has been viewed by Hyder E Rollins as ‘a playwright whose work forms the chief connecting link between the Elizabethan and the Restoration drama’.<sup>189</sup> He has been portrayed variously by contemporaries and later biographers as an undercover critic trying to reform the court of Charles I; a single-minded enthusiast so obsessed with the theatre that he was prepared to make any compromise to persuade the Puritans to move toward legalizing theatrical performances;<sup>190</sup> and, less flatteringly, as a figure of fun whose mutilated nose made him an object of derision outweighing all his achievements. Howard S. Collins has claimed that Davenant ‘transported the valued traditions of one age of comedy across the gap of two decades into a period of significantly more brilliant comedy’,<sup>191</sup> and Kevin Sharpe has argued that his plays, especially

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<sup>188</sup> Alfred Harbage, *Sir William Davenant, Poet Venturer, 1606-1668*, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press; London: H Milford; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935); Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant: Poet Laureate, Playwright, Civil War General, Restoration Theatre Manager*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987); Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment*; John Stubbs, *Reprobates*; Sophia Blaydes and Philip Bordinat, *Sir William Davenant: an Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland Press, 1986) and Philip Bordinat, *Sir William Davenant* (Boston: Twayne, 1981).

<sup>189</sup> Hyder E Rollins, ‘A Contribution to the History of the English Commonwealth Drama’, *Studies in Philology* xviii.3 (1921), 267-333 (p.271).

<sup>190</sup> Kevin Sharpe, in *Criticism and Compliment*, suggests that Davenant’s plays were not purely straightforward in praise of the Caroline court, while Dale Randall describes Davenant, ‘the canny and political showman’.( Randall, p. 177.)

<sup>191</sup> Howard S Collins, *The Comedy of Sir William Davenant*, (The Hague: Mouton & Co, 1967), p. 8.

the masque *Salamacida Spolia*, offer a sophisticated critique of the court of Charles I,<sup>192</sup> although Martin Butler regards *Salamacida Spolia* as an important attempt at political bridge-building which ultimately failed.<sup>193</sup> Sharpe views Davenant as a compromiser, happy to let fate take its course and to act as a theatre impresario under Cromwell,<sup>194</sup> whilst Graham Parry and Joad Raymond have highlighted Davenant's political *nous*, the skill with which he managed to survive his imprisonment during the commonwealth, and his growing favour with Cromwell during the 1650s.<sup>195</sup> More recently Dawn Lewcock has revisited Davenant's work, showing him to be a shrewd theatrical practitioner and impresario.<sup>196</sup> I would argue that Davenant was socially and professionally ambitious – the son of an Oxford vintner, he had made excellent use of an opportunity as page to the Duchess of Richmond to infiltrate aristocratic circles, eventually establishing himself as one of Henrietta Maria's Court favourites.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> '[...]if Davenant pleased his patrons it was not because he sycophantically flattered them. We have seen from his drama and verse that Davenant exposed the moral failings of the court to mordant satire and criticism. We have suggested that even in his poetry of compliment there is ambivalence, counsel and criticism as well as praise.' Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment*, p 244.

<sup>193</sup> Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>194</sup> 'William Davenant was first and foremost a professional playwright. He became attached to the queen's circle but never seems to have been close to the king [Charles I]. As far as we know, he held no court office and probably fulfilled his life ambition when, in the England of the Restoration, he managed his own theatre and company.' Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment*, p 213.

<sup>195</sup> *Milton and the Terms of Liberty*, eds Graham Parry and Raymond Joad (Cambridge: Brewer, 2002).

<sup>196</sup> Dawn Lewcock, *Sir William Davenant, the Court Masque, and the English Seventeenth-Century Scenic Stage, c. 1605-c. 1700* (New York Amherst: Cambria Press, 2008).

<sup>197</sup> 'By chance, the duchess..., Davenant's mother and aunt had all been patients at the same time to the well-known London physician Simon Forman... it seems reasonable, as Mary Edmond suggests, that they grew acquainted through their visits, if not before.' Stubbs, *Reprobates*, p. 28.

But his career interests were as theatre manager and impresario; his fanatical enthusiasm for the theatre may have served him well as he talked his way out of rather more dangerous situations.<sup>198</sup> Although he had courted Cromwell, in order to begin restoring theatrical entertainments in 1650s England, Davenant managed to remain in Royal favour at the Restoration; unsurprisingly, when the two playhouses were opened, the Catholic Davenant was given charge of the company whose patron was the King's Catholic brother, James, Duke of York.

Davenant was both a theatrical innovator and a shrewd judge of what would please his aristocratic public, but, as the first part of this chapter will argue, he was also concerned with more lofty aims, namely the creation of a literary inheritance which looked back to the Elizabethan Golden Age and forward to the Augustan age of Dryden and Pope. His revisions of plays by his brother's godfather and family friend, William Shakespeare, are essential to the creation of this inheritance, but his first adaptation, *The Law Against Lovers* (1662), is interesting as a merger of two of Shakespeare's plays, *Much Ado About Nothing* (1600) and *Measure for Measure* (1623). From looking at these plays it is possible to gain a sense of the literary legacy Davenant was trying to achieve. As I will show in the first part of this chapter, by facilitating the "cross-over" of Shakespeare's plays from the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods to the Restoration and Augustan periods, and thereby establishing a clear thread of dramatic inheritance, Davenant established a closer link between the immediate past and the foreseeable future. Crucial to this idea of inheritance was his development of

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<sup>198</sup> Davenant was implicated in the Army Plot of 1641, an attempt at a military coup against parliament. He was also arrested in 1650 as he attempted to sail to Maryland to found a Royalist colony for Henrietta Maria and was imprisoned under sentence of death in the Tower of London until 1654.

the theory of ‘Wit’, both as a characteristic and as a tool. and the second part of my chapter will look at Davenant’s treatment of ‘Wit’ in his popular “cross-over” comedy, *The Wits* (1636). To provide a counterbalance to Davenant’s argument, I will conclude with a discussion of the negative side of ‘Wit”, challenged by John Wilson in his comedy *The Cheats* (1664).

In the early years of the seventeenth century, poets such as Edmund Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney had discussed the nature of literary inheritance, which I broadly define for the purposes of this thesis as a passing down from father to son of the traditions and skills of writing.<sup>199</sup> A clear sense of a need to trace a nearer inheritance developed in the 1620s and 1630s, possibly as the result of the explosion of literary talent during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I, but also as a response to the upheaval of the Civil War. As Steven N. Zwicker comments:

Civil war was an event that changed the conditions of public utterance, that distinguished the culture of these years from what had come before and from what was to follow when the wars had finally passed beyond living memory.<sup>200</sup>

It became increasingly important to Caroline authors that their work should be preserved, and with the “Sons of Ben”, a clearer sense of legacy developed from generation to generation, and from father to son. Authors began to argue that it was possible to trace one’s literary excellence back not to the remote

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<sup>199</sup> For example Sidney’s discussions in *The Defense of Poetry* (1595), and Spenser’s deliberate echoes of Middle English, in particular Chaucer, in *The Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596, 1609).

<sup>200</sup> Steven N. Zwicker, *Lines of Authority: Politics and English Literary Culture 1649 – 1689*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 9. Further references to this source will be given in the form of the author’s name and page number.

inspiration of the classical authors, or to the chronologically nearer talents of Chaucer, but to writers who had been active merely a generation ago.

Shakespeare, Jonson, Spenser, Sidney and Marlowe were admired and emulated both by their contemporaries and their immediate successors, Brome, Fletcher, Shirley and Davenant. As Gavin Alexander has commented, Ben Jonson forged links with Sidney.<sup>201</sup> Richard Brome made a cult of his association with Jonson as the poet's servant and later collaborator, and Davenant emphasized his closeness to his parents' friend and brother's godfather William Shakespeare, who (he allowed to be rumoured) may have been closer still to the poet himself.<sup>202</sup> The link was sustained by John Fletcher, who had been Shakespeare's co-author; the plays which Fletcher wrote with his collaborator Francis Beaumont were hugely popular with seventeenth-century audiences, particularly during the Civil War years.

The overt suppression of dramatic performance during the Interregnum did not completely silence playwrights. The foundations of the concept of literary inheritance, which Dryden was to promote so strongly a century later, are found in

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<sup>201</sup> 'Jonson leans on Sidney's own ambivalence about inheritance in his effort[...]to disentangle familial from literary inheritance, and find that it is he, and not Sidney's daughter or brother or niece, who is Sidney's rightful heir.' Gavin Alexander, *Writing After Sidney: The Literary Response to Sir Philip Sidney 1586-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 333

<sup>202</sup> Although Davenant encouraged the rumour that he was Shakespeare's natural son, this legend, amplified by John Aubrey in his *Brief Lives*, and, more recently by Peter Ackroyd in his recent biography of Shakespeare, is largely discredited by modern scholars. Aubrey recorded that, when contemporaries implied that Shakespeare may have been Davenant's natural father, Davenant 'seemed contented enough to be thought his Son.' *Aubrey's Brief Lives*, ed. by Oliver Lawson Dick (London: Secker & Warburg Ltd, 1949, rep. London: Mandarin, 1992), p. 85. As Peter Ackroyd has observed, the poet appears to have been happy to sacrifice his mother's reputation for the sake of his own literary fame. Peter Ackroyd, *Shakespeare: The Biography* (London: Vintage Books, 2006), p. 379.

the undercover writing which proliferated during this time. In the 1660s, Davenant reopened the War of the Theatres in his rivalry with Killigrew. Their argument began more over the number of allocated texts to each company – Charles II permitted Davenant to hold onto the plays of Shakespeare, and a few by other authors, but allowed Killigrew to take a far larger number of plays for his company's repertory.<sup>203</sup> However, the two managers then formed opposing camps in which new authors were obliged to remain. As Mongi Raddidi comments, 'Cavalier poets wrote for Davenant or Killigrew and their respective companies mostly because of their personal relationship to one of the managers or to one of the patrons of the theatre.'<sup>204</sup> So, for example, Sir George Etherege's and Thomas Shadwell's output was, with one exception, wholly for the Duke of York's Company, whilst Wycherley wrote for the King's Company.<sup>205</sup>

The Civil War had fractured families, destroyed property, and undermined the social fabric. In the Restoration, the urge to create and sustain a close dramatic inheritance increased as Charles II and his courtiers sought to stabilize the new monarchy. Once the excitement of seeing plays on the reopened public stage had died down, part of the stabilizing of Restoration society was effected through Davenant's development of the concept of a dramatic inheritance which

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<sup>203</sup> Davenant was granted sole performing rights to all of his own plays, nine of Shakespeare's, Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, and a play entitled *The Sophy* by an unknown author. Also, for the first two months after his move, he was allowed the performing rights of five plays by Beaumont and Fletcher, and Shakespeare's *Pericles*. See Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of English Drama 1660 – 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923, 4<sup>th</sup> edn, 1955), I, p. 352 – 353.

<sup>204</sup> Mongi Raddadi, *Davenant's Adaptations of Shakespeare* (Sweden: Uppsala, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1979), p.36. Further references to this source will be given in the form of the author's name and page number.

<sup>205</sup> The exception being Shadwell's adaptation of Moliere's *Miser* (1672), for Killigrew's King's Company, and possibly his version of *Tartuffe*, which was never performed and which text was lost.

underpinned the work of many new courtier-playwrights and the professional writers. Instead of rewriting classical dramas to give them a contemporary twist, authors now revised and reinterpreted plays which had only recently been published (such as Fletcher's *Valentinian* (1647) , which was substantially rewritten by John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, staged in 1684 and published in 1685), and which had never been staged. Alongside these plays were those which “crossed over” from the 1630s to the 1660s, and Davenant and Killigrew revived works by the major authors later linked as a triumvirate by John Dryden – Shakespeare, Jonson and Fletcher. The first play to be staged in the new Restoration playhouse (then occupied jointly by Davenant and Killigrew) was *Othello* in which, famously, Desdemona was played for the first time ever on the English public stage by a woman.<sup>206</sup> When the two managers split, Davenant opened the Duke of York's Theatre with a repertoire which included “cross-over” adaptations of some of Shakespeare's plays. His first revival of a play by Shakespeare was *Hamlet*, starring the rising young actor Thomas Betterton. More radical was his revision of Shakespeare's problematic tragicomedy *Measure for Measure* into a comedy, *The Law Against Lovers*.

### **Davenant's Shakespearean adaptations**

Davenant characteristically dealt with the question of rewriting and restaging a text in a strongly proactive way. Authors were not protective of their plays in the

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<sup>206</sup> The preface was written specially for this production by Thomas Jordan ‘to introduce the first Woman that came to act on the stage in the tragedy called the Moor of Venice.’ Margaret Hughes was probably the first non-aristocratic actress to appear officially on the stage, although her status was quasi-royal; she was the long-term mistress of Charles II's cousin, Prince Rupert of the Rhine. This sense of ‘keeping it in the family’ permeates the Restoration playhouse.



same way as today; questions of intellectual property would not have troubled them as much as protecting their status as authors. Audiences judged reworked plays according to the nature of the revisions, and their relative effectiveness in performance. By reworking Shakespeare's originals, which were themselves often based on earlier sources, Davenant created his own repertoire of "cross-over" comedies. Some scholars have taken a poor view of the Restoration adapters who included Dryden and Shadwell as well as Davenant; from Hazelton Spencer's vitriolic attack on their 'improvements' – 'the cocksuredness of the Restoration intelligentsia is almost incredible' – to Michael Dobson's description of their work as marked by a 'Cavalier approach... in every sense.'<sup>207</sup> Even one of Davenant's defenders, Katherine West Scheil, has argued that 'Davenant's changes to Shakespeare were clear and calculated choices made by an experienced theatre manager attempting to capture current audience taste for entertainment; the need to create a successful play took precedence over any desire to craft political parallels or improve Shakespeare aesthetically.'<sup>208</sup> But this is to underestimate

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<sup>207</sup> Hazelton Spencer, *Shakespeare Improved: The Restoration Versions in Quarto and on the Stage*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), p. 145. Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet; Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship 1660-1769* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p.18. Sandra Clark has provided a more positive view of the Restoration adaptations. 'Adaptation can be regarded as a creative process as well as a matter of expediency', she writes, pointing out that 'Adaptors such as Dryden, Tate and Cibber were brilliantly successful in meeting these needs; their versions revitalized plays that might have suffered theatrical eclipse in a new milieu that regarded itself as infinitely more sophisticated than that of Shakespeare's own time.' *Shakespeare Made Fit: Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare* (London: Dent, 1997), p. xliii. Further references to this source will be given in the form of the author's name and page number.

<sup>208</sup> Katherine West Scheil, 'Sir William Davenant's use of Shakespeare in "The Law Against Lovers"', *Philological Quarterly* 76.4 (1997), in *GoogleScholar*

Davenant's literary intelligence and his significance in leading and shaping the seventeenth-century stage. Davenant made accessible the texts of his literary 'father' – echoing, perhaps, Charles II's attempt to encourage his people to see him as accessible in contrast to his reserved father, Charles I.

Contemporaries such as John Evelyn welcomed changes to the Shakespearean plays which they viewed as outdated and confusing. Perhaps surprisingly, Shakespeare was seen by seventeenth-century audiences as using rather obscure and at times colloquial, language. Dryden himself commented:

It must be allowed to the present age, the tongue in general is so much refined since Shakespeare's time that many of his words, and more of his phrases, are scarce intelligible. And of those we understand, some are ungrammatical, others coarse; and his whole style is so pestered with figurative expressions, that it is as affected as it is obscure.<sup>209</sup>

In contrast, as mentioned previously, Beaumont and Fletcher were judged accessible and relevant by Restoration audiences. As Sandra Clark has noted, 'from the second Folio (1632) of Shakespeare's plays onwards a process of tacit refinement and correction had been taking place'. (Clark, p. xliii.) More significantly, Clark has pointed out that Davenant's proposal to the Lord Chamberlain that he should refine and revise the plays resulted in a legal command to do so – 'Davenant was obliged by law to revise Shakespeare's original, whether he wanted to or not' – whereas Killigrew, who owned the rights to most of the texts in the Restoration repertoire, was not placed under the same obligation. However, as Mongo Raddadi has suggested, there was sufficient

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<[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_hb3362/is\\_n4\\_v76/ai\\_n28698349/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3362/is_n4_v76/ai_n28698349/)> , pp. 1 – 8 [accessed 20 July 2011] Further references to this source will be given in the form of the author's name and page number.

<sup>209</sup> *Preface to Troilus and Cressida* (1679), by John Dryden, quoted by Raddadi, p.49.

aesthetic reason for Davenant to wish to adapt Shakespeare's text anyway to make it more theatrical, whether or not he was legally obliged to do so.<sup>210</sup>

Davenant, like Killigrew, was probably under pressure from Charles II and his government to use the theatre to define and endorse the "new" Restoration society so different in character to the Elizabethan and Jacobean worlds which Shakespeare had known. Killigrew portrayed a society which was flexible about marriage vows, and relaxed about sexual mores. Davenant, favourite of Henrietta Maria and the powerful Catholics, was not able (by reason of his proclaimed faith) to promote extra-marital liaisons, and indeed needed to be tactful about endorsing sexual relations outside marriage. He therefore concentrated on other themes in Shakespeare's plays. His adaptation of *Macbeth*, for example, focuses on the political dilemmas of a ruler. Christopher Spencer has commented in detail on the changes which Davenant made to *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*; although Davenant cut the lesser characters in *Macbeth*, he wrote extra scenes to explore the theme of ambition versus love, an argument which seems particularly relevant to a post-war audience.<sup>211</sup> *Hamlet* was presented almost unchanged (except shorter), and Davenant's revisions emphasise the moral problem of whether a murder should be avenged by murder. *The Tempest* provided Davenant with an opportunity to stage

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<sup>210</sup> 'The extensive revisions of language, characters, and plot transform *The Law Against Lovers* into a new play. Similarities with *Measure for Measure* and *Much Ado* are found everywhere in the adaptation, but the spirit of love and honour which manifests itself differently in the various couples is alien to the world of Shakespeare's play.' (Raddadi, p.97.)

<sup>211</sup> As Spencer has commented "Although Davenant removed *Macbeth* to the comparatively superficial level on which Restoration tragedy customarily operates, and although the poetry of his lines is not distinguished, his version of the play is a coherent and forceful presentation of his chosen theme." *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare* ed. by Christopher Spencer, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), p. 16.

the magical theatrical effects he so enjoyed, and to create an early version of pantomime. *The Law Against Lovers* is unusual, however, as a new play constructed from two “cross-over” texts which together offered Davenant opportunities to portray the new Restoration society as lenient and fair, presided over by a just and peace-loving monarch. The fact that he only tried this experiment once suggests that he did not judge it to be a success. Perhaps his Catholic beliefs meant that he could not be seen here openly to defend Charles II’s libertinism – unlike the Protestant Killigrew in *The Parson’s Wedding*.

### ***The Law Against Lovers***

It might be assumed that for Davenant, his adaptations of Shakespeare may have had particular personal resonance, due to their family connections. But he did not acknowledge his source in his first adaptation, *The Law Against Lovers*, performed in 1662, which adds Beatrice and Benedick from *Much Ado about Nothing* to the basic plot and characters of *Measure for Measure*. The combination of these two sources, which Katherine West Scheil has described as ‘bizarre and fascinating’ (Scheil, p.1), is indeed surprising. As Scheil has argued, ‘Davenant’s primary strategy in crafting ‘The Law Against Lovers’ was not to improve Shakespeare, revive Shakespeare, rewrite Shakespeare, or even acknowledge that he was performing Shakespeare, but rather to act two old plays under a new title, packaging them as a new product and passing them off as his own enterprise.’ (*Ibid*). Nor did he mention Shakespeare and Fletcher’s *Two Noble Kinsmen*, the source of his play *The Rivals*. This suggests that Davenant was first and foremost a man of the theatre who sought his own popularity, and

was not sufficiently convinced that his godfather carried enough literary weight to merit citation as Davenant's source. (Subsequently *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Henry IV Part 1*, *King Lear*, and his most famous adaptation, with John Dryden, of *The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island*, all retained their original titles.) Scholars have considered the relationship between *The Law Against Lovers*, *Measure for Measure* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, but its status as a "cross-over" comedy remains unexamined. In what follows, I will argue that Davenant deliberately makes his source material relevant to post-war, post-republic England. In this regard, *The Law Against Lovers* is more complex than Killigrew's restatement of the manifesto of the Restoration court.<sup>212</sup> The most obvious example of this specificity to the Restoration period (which has not been noted before) is Davenant's deliberate linking of the play to actual events in the seventeenth-century calendar. Davenant clearly projects the character of the Duke in *Measure for Measure* onto the real Charles II. In *Measure for Measure* the Duke speaks of the 'fourteen years' during which 'strict Statutes and most biting Laws'(1.3.19) have been allowed to sleep due to the Duke's desire to behave as a fond father to his people. This lassitude has led to anarchy, where 'The baby beats the nurse and quite athwart / Goes all decorum.' (1.3.30-31) The Duke is performing his own penance, and sees the unfairness of imposing strict laws in his name –

Sith 'twas my fault to give the people scope,  
'Twould be my tyranny to strike and gall them,

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<sup>212</sup> John Jowett has argued that Thomas Middleton had also rewritten part of the extant 1603/4 text of *Measure for Measure* in a 1623 version, with Act 1. Sc 2 particularly topical about the Thirty Years War. I have checked the text and none of the changes which Davenant makes are to the claimed "Middleton text", other than the change of city from Vienna to Turin. *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* eds Gary Taylor, John Lavagnino and John Jowett (New York: Oxford University Press Inc, 2007, repr. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2010), p. 1542 – 1585.

For what I bid them do.<sup>213</sup>

Aware of the shortcomings of his rule, he asks Angelo to bring in a more repressive regime. Davenant changes ‘fourteen years’ to ‘Nineteen’ – the number of years England was officially without the theatres. Implicitly, the commonwealth and republic is depicted as a time when all was turned ‘topsy turvey’ until the new king returns with his government to restore the *status quo*.

Both plays contain a key character named Claudio whose actions provide the catalyst for the main plots of both plays, and whose beliefs and attitudes are the subject for discussion. Shakespeare was not careless in his repetition of names; there are only two instances of a character named Claudio in the canon, and only two of a character named Claudius (a variant on the spelling). The Latin name ‘Claudio’, as Shakespeare and Davenant would very likely have known, means ‘walks with a limp,’ suggesting someone who is flawed and walks imperfectly from the start. The Claudios/Claudiuses are shown to live up to this definition. The first Claudius, a servant to Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, fails to see the ghost of Caesar as he keeps watch in Brutus’ orchard; when questioned with his fellow servants, he agrees that they fell asleep and saw nothing. The second Claudius is of course the flawed King and usurper, Hamlet’s uncle.

The two versions of the character Claudio are also morally ambiguous. Claudio in *Much Ado About Nothing* is the idealistic young nobleman who impulsively falls in love with Hero, and equally impulsively withdraws his love

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<sup>213</sup>William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, in *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed.by. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2005), 1.3.35 – 37. Further references to this edition will follow quotations in the text.

and rejects her when she is apparently proved to be unfaithful. Tricked into believing that his cruel public rejection has killed Hero, Claudio learns not to judge by appearances. Both Claudios act as catalysts for plot developments, and precipitate the plays' moral dilemmas. Davenant's adaptation however concentrates on the Claudio of *Measure for Measure*, not the one in *Much Ado*. The only transferred elements of the comedy – albeit an important part of *The Law Against Lovers* – are the popular episodes which form the love plot between Claudio's friend Benedick, and Hero's friend Beatrice. Famously tricked into acknowledging their love for each other, Beatrice and Benedick provide the witty and realistic foils to the idealistic romantic lovers Claudio and Hero.

Although Shakespeare's setting of Vienna is moved to Turin, Davenant retains the main plot of *Measure for Measure*, while transposing the dialogue between Beatrice and Benedick from *Much Ado*. Benedick becomes Angelo's brother, and Beatrice, Angelo's ward; she also acquires a cousin, Claudio's mistress Julietta, and a little sister, Viola, who sings and dances throughout the play. Viola bears no resemblance to her namesake in *Twelfth Night*, being a pert and smaller / younger version of her witty sister Beatrice as Benedick comments rather ruefully:

This is not a chip of the old block, but will prove  
A smart twig of the young branch.<sup>214</sup>

Viola's repartee with Benedick's friend, the rake Balthazar, bears out Benedick's judgement:

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<sup>214</sup> William Davenant, *The Law Against Lovers* (1662) in *The Dramatic Works of Sir William Davenant*, ed. by James Maidment and W H Logan, (Edinburgh: William Paterson; London: Sotheman & Co, 1872), 1.1, v, p. 124 Further references to this edition will follow quotations in the text.

*Balthazar:* Madam, the gentleman [Benedick] is not in your books.

*Viola:* If he were, I have heard my sister say  
She would burn her study.

*Balthazar:* Small mistress, have you learned that in your primer?  
This, madam, is your pretty bud of wit.

*Viola:* A bud that has some prickles sir, take heed;  
You cannot gather me. (1.1.p120)

Davenant is relaxed and confident when writing new dialogue like this; and although he seems to have been working with a text to hand (some of the scenes are quoted verbatim), he also makes some significant changes when reproducing dialogue directly from Shakespeare, In *Measure for Measure*, the Duke declares:

[...] I love the people,  
But do not like to stage me to their eyes.  
Though it do well, I do not relish well  
Their loud applause and Aves vehement.  
Nor do I think the man of safe discretion  
That does affect it. (1.1.67-72)

This is re-rendered in *The Law Against Lovers* as:

[...] I love the people,  
But would not on a stage salute the crowd.  
I never relish their applause; nor think  
The Prince has true discretion who affects it. (1.1.p.119)

Both Dukes distrust public approbation; however, there is a difference between Shakespeare's Duke who is aware of the theatricality of his 'performance' to the people, and Davenant's Duke who simply 'is', who receives the salutations of the people and chooses to remain aloof. *Measure for Measure* was performed before James I, a consummate controller and performer of the role of king; *The Law Against Lovers* was performed before his grandson, Charles II, whose version of 'saluting the Crowd' was to sit amongst them and watch an actor



play monarch on the stage.<sup>215</sup> Davenant's Duke apparently has more in common with Charles's father, the aloof Charles I, but perhaps his comment is an intended warning to the new King not to trust popular opinion too much, and to beware the fickle public.

There are changes in the vocabulary which are small but significant in suggesting the way in which words changed during the civil war and commonwealth period. Isabella 'cheers' her brother in *Measure for Measure* by reassuring him, 'Thou art too noble to conserve a life / In base appliances' (3.1.86-7) and this is changed in *The Law Against Lovers* to 'You are too noble to conserve a life / By wretched remedies.' (3.1.p.159) Claudio fears death in *Measure for Measure* as lying in 'cold obstruction'; in *The Law Against Lovers* it is lying 'in silent darkness' which terrifies him. In *Measure for Measure* he is imprisoned for his 'lechery'; in *The Law Against Lovers* this has been changed to 'incontinence'. In *Measure for Measure* he asks, 'Has [Angelo] affections in him, / That thus can make him bite the law by the nose, / When he would force it?' (3.1.107-109) In *the Law against Lovers* he asks 'Has he religion in him?' (3.1.p.160) Significantly, Davenant makes Claudio a more virtuous and honourable character than does Shakespeare. Whereas Claudio in *Measure for Measure* begs his sister to dishonour herself with Angelo in order to save him, Claudio in *The Law Against Lovers* declares:

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<sup>215</sup> Jonathan Goldberg has shown how James I made an entrance at the climax of the celebratory pageants – 'Unlike Elizabeth, James said nothing throughout his entrance, displayed no response to the pageants. Rather, the pageants responded to him.' Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature*, p. 31. Goldberg sees James I as needing sympathy from his audience, but dreading to expose himself to them. Charles II, although keen to present himself as accessible to all, might be seen equally as hiding his secret self behind a mask of gregariousness and affability.

Sweet sister! I would live,  
 Were not the ransom of my life much more  
 Than all your honour and your virtue too  
 By which you are maintain'd, can ever pay,  
 Without undoing both. (3.1,p.161)

Davenant argues for hiding behind an artificial code of chivalry whereas

Shakespeare shows the human frailty and the reality of facing death.

Davenant alters the meaning of some of his version of Shakespeare's text, but in some ways the poetry is lost. Although contemporaries found Shakespeare's writing obscure in places, Davenant's revisions are clearer but less lyrical, aiming for a particularly immediate style, in contrast to Shakespeare's more measured build-up of the scene. In *Measure for Measure* the idea of Angelo's promotion is developed over the first twenty lines of dialogue, when he is summoned to attend the Duke, Escalus and attendant lords. In *The Law Against Lovers* the Duke and Angelo enter immediately together, later joined by Escalus; the sense of closeness between the two is established, and the Duke sets the scene for the comic subplot by mentioning Benedick:

*Duke:* Your brother will be here to-night; and brings  
 His share of victory and fair renown. (1.1.p.117)

The portrait of Benedick the soldier, which Shakespeare pencils in at the beginning of *Much Ado*, is developed by Davenant particularly in the second part of the play, where he introduces some new material unconnected to his source. In Act 5, Benedick leads an uprising against Angelo's repressive regime, storming the prison to rescue Claudio and Julietta, and replaying the civil war between cavalier and Puritan, brother and brother, and liberator against repressor for the audience of Charles II's London.:

2 *Servant*: Arm, arm, my lord! your brother is revolted,  
 Heading a body of disbanded officers.  
 He is in skirmish with your guards,  
 To rescue Claudio from the Law.  
*Angelo*: My brother grown my public enemy? (5.1.p.194 )

Angelo's fear of the disorder which Benedick is creating echoes the parliamentarians' suppression of the London playhouses and public gatherings for fear they might lead to riot and disturbance. Benedick is striking a blow not only for civil liberty, but for the freedom to love – 'which now is made high-treason'. (4.1.p.177). Since Claudio genuinely loves Julietta, he does not see that he has committed an offence – and in the pre-Angelo society, he would not have been charged with any. Davenant has to be seen to support the new King and the new – more sexually lenient – society. So the 'Law against Lovers' of which Claudio falls foul, is derided by the popular Benedick and his friends, particularly since – in both plays – Claudio declares that he and Julietta are man and wife in all but name. For Beatrice, this is as binding and true as a more formally recognised alliance:

*Beatrice*: Methinks my guardian  
 Is but a rude tenant. How durst he with  
 Unmanly power, force my cousin Juliet from me?  
*Eschalus*: Lady, it was the law that us'd that force.  
*Beatrice*: The law? Is she not married by such vows  
 As will stand firm in Heaven? that's the substantial part  
 Which carries the effect, and must she then  
 Be punisht for neglect of form?  
 Must conscience be made good by compliment?  
*Eschalus*: My brother will have men behave themselves  
 To Heaven, as boys do to their pedants; they  
 Must not say grace without making their legs. (2.1.p.136 )

Beatrice defends love without the need for a formal contract; she does not defend love outside marriage, and is not an advocate of the sexual freedom and

careless libertinism of Charles II's court; Eschalus admits his brother's obsession with formality, and Beatrice wins the argument. Interestingly, Davenant, the converted Catholic, also takes a sly sideswipe at the genuflections which signify a more formal, 'High' church obeisance to God. Angelo places the Law above all things; the Law is his particular God, to which even God Himself is subject:

*Isabella:* ...What would you do  
           If he, who on the utmost top of heights  
           On judges sits, should judge you as you are?  
*Angelo:* Be you content, fair maid,  
           It was the law, not I, condemn'd your brother; (2.1.p.139)

By critiquing the overly formal and rule-bound society presided over by Angelo / the Puritans, Davenant indicates his support of Charles II's more relaxed regime. But he does not necessarily advocate the sexual freedom of Restoration society; Benedick admits that by casting off the rules and shackles of matrimony, the banned lovers have also lost the opportunity to procreate, which Davenant argues is the only natural evidence of love:

*Benedick:* This business, Balthazar, requires our care;  
For we, having professed against the bonds  
Of marriage, and [Angelo] restraining  
The liberty of lovers, the good Duke  
When he returns, will find no children left  
In Turin.

*Lucio:* For my part, sir,  
I only fear the destruction of learning:  
For if there be no children, farewell grammar-schools.

(1.1.p.123)

Lucio's ambiguous response possibly implies an interest in teaching 'children' the love-tricks to be found at 'grammar school' level. But Davenant, albeit the keen Royalist, may be displaying an uneasiness about the new Restoration social

behaviour, attempting to interrogate the sexual morality underlying certain behaviours, and ultimately forced to abandon the argument.

Davenant also makes clever use of his omission of the character of Mariana, using this to overturn the view of Isabella as virtuous and honourable. Isabella is slyly criticised for preserving her virtue, which is seen to be so fanatical that, in *The Law Against Lovers*, she visits Julietta in prison to propose her substitution in the bed trick. Isabella suggests that Julietta takes her place to spend the night with Angelo in order to save Claudio; Julietta refuses without hesitation:

*Julietta:* E're I will Claudio in my self betray,  
I will the torment of his death endure.  
His sickness more becomes him than the cure.  
*Isabella:* How Juliet? can you righteously refuse  
Th' expedient which you plead that I should use? (4.1.p.176)

Because, in Isabella's view, Julietta has fallen once, she is irredeemable. Julietta could right her sin of sleeping with Claudio outside marriage by now sleeping with Angelo to save his life; since, for enjoying sexual relations with Claudio outside marriage, Julietta is no better than a prostitute, she has no moral right to object to this solution. Isabella is more afraid for her own spiritual health than the wellbeing of her own sex.

If the Isabella / Angelo / Julietta / Claudio plot can be seen as offering a moral commentary on the contrasting regime of the Puritans and the returning Charles II, Beatrice and Benedick function as social commentators on the new reign of the new king; like Killigrew, Davenant is setting out the Restoration manifesto of pleasant company with a sexual implication:

*Benedick:* No whisp'ring the Platonic way?

*Beatrice:* Platonic way? my cousin has Plato'd it  
 Profoundly; has she not? i'th name of mischief,  
 Make friendship with yourselves, and not with us.  
 Let ev'ry Damon of you, chuse his Pytheas,  
 And tattle romantic philosophy  
 Together, like bearded gossips.  
*Benedick:* Though such conversations might breed peace in  
 A palace, yet 'twould make but a thin court. (4.1.p.178)

Beatrice's teasing recommendation of neo-Platonism – 'tattle romantic philosophy' – is rejected in Benedick's response that peace in a palace 'twould make but a thin court', an argument which would surely please Charles II and his hedonistic court.

The song by Lucio, Beatrice, Benedick and Viola offers some advice to the rulers on the uselessness of hardline politics; the party of love is in the ascendant, as Angelo will soon discover:

*Benedick:* Sure *Angelo* knows Loves party is strong;  
 Love melts, like soft wax, the hearts of the young;  
 And none are so old but they think on the taste,  
 And weep with remembrance of kindnesses past.  
*Chorus:* Let him plot all he can,  
 Like a politic man,  
 Yet love though a child may fit him,  
 The small archer though blind,  
 Such an arrow will find,  
 As with an old trick, shall hit him. (5.1.p.192 )

Davenant's picture of the new Restoration society is driven by love between the young (and if not the actual young, then the re-born young); there is no room for power politics when the true power is held by lovers. Like Killigrew he preaches the new Restoration social 'manifesto' of sexual freedom and libertinism, as opposed to platonic courtly love. However, whereas Killigrew depicts a society which survives on the pursuit of sexual love and hedonistic

pleasure for its own sake, Davenant argues for a society where sexual love and physical expression is most satisfying when based upon true and lasting affection.

Davenant's adaptation was intended to please his audience, and this should not be underestimated when considering the repertory of the Restoration theatres.<sup>216</sup> The two managers needed to attract audiences, often at the expense of literary taste, and this has caused problems for modern scholars who have regretted the appropriation and transformation of Shakespeare's work in particular.<sup>217</sup> While Christopher Spencer has made a case for Davenant's attempt to 'show the new court and a younger generation that his taste was up to date and that Shakespeare, whom he admired greatly, could be made attractive to the new patrons of the theater', he has also concluded that the resultant plays lose the subtlety of the Shakespearean originals, as the adapters concentrate on moral and political arguments at the expense of characterization.<sup>218</sup> Spencer has written particularly scathingly about Davenant and Dryden's adaptation of *The Tempest*, suggesting that 'Viewed as an adaptation, *The Tempest* is cheapened by the

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<sup>216</sup> *The Law Against Lovers* was not revived after its initial performances in 1662, and was not as successful as the later adaptations of *Macbeth* and the extremely successful version of *The Tempest*, *The Enchanted Island*, although this was superseded by the operatic version produced in 1674 by Dryden and Shadwell, based on Davenant's text, with music by Henry Purcell.

<sup>217</sup> Michael Dobson's suggestion that Davenant and his contemporaries viewed Shakespeare as 'at worst as an artless rustic, at best as an archaic father-king' seems to me to be undermining their admiration of the poet who, after all, Davenant was concerned to claim as natural father. Dobson, *Making of the National Poet*, p.13.

<sup>218</sup> *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare*, ed. by Spencer, p. 1. 'The characters, then, tend to become generalized as the adapter fits them into his mould, where they serve the stronger interests of moral clarity, of easily understandable motivation, of sharpened comparison and contrast, or simply of balance and unity... Perhaps the most extraordinary metamorphosis is [Davenant's] *Macbeth* who must choose between Love and Ambition in IV iv.' (p. 12).

addition of Dorinda, Hippolito, Sycorax and Milcha; but, if we are in the proper mood, we can enjoy a play containing two women who have never seen a man, a man who has never seen a woman, brother and sister monsters, and male and female spirits.’ (Spencer, p. 9). This is a little dismissive of Davenant’s art; the addition of siblings for Miranda and Ferdinand gives the play a romantic quartet of lovers which is typical of Shakespeare’s earlier comedies. Sycorax provides a counterbalance to Prospero, and Ariel finds a (literally) kindred spirit in Milcha. Davenant achieves a sense of balance within his *Tempest* which is less clear, perhaps, in Shakespeare’s original. Admittedly the burgeoning sexual awakening of most of the characters might be a little tiresome to a modern audience, but to Charles II and the audiences this was typical of the titillation and sexual frankness which was becoming characteristic of the ‘new’ Restoration comedy.

I have been arguing that the significance of Shakespeare’s “cross-over” can be appreciated through close attention to Davenant’s alterations of Shakespeare’s style and thematic focus. By manipulating the text, omitting certain characters or passages, and bringing more attention to others, Davenant shows how a “cross-over” text can result in a different play with different designs on its audience. His slight but significant changes to Shakespeare’s text enable Davenant to relate his godfather’s plays directly to the Restoration.

### **The Inheritance of Wit**

Through Davenant’s efforts to restore Shakespeare in particular, he facilitated the “cross-over” of one particular strand of playwrights’ dramatic inheritance in the 1660s. While Charles II encouraged the newly established Royal Society to



develop its scientific investigations, experimentations and inventions, he continued to pay attention to the arts world where there was a sense of historical continuity, the passing down of literary techniques from one poet to another, and from one literary circle to another.<sup>219</sup> The link with the past was important in enabling the developments of the future. Post-war anxieties were allayed by the sense of cultural inheritance, a stable grounding recovered and developed by Davenant and Dryden. Contemporary authors colluded in the reaffirming of a fantasised ideal literary world which traced a legacy from the inspiration of classical authors through the technical brilliance of Shakespeare, Fletcher, Jonson and their “Sons” to the present day.

The use of “cross-over” comedies in this was important. As I have shown earlier, the concept and practice of “inheritance” (the passing down of property through families) had changed. The nature of inheritance, its deprivation and restoration, was a key subject in both pre- and post-Commonwealth comedy. The anxiety over the possibility of deprivation of property, which underlies the plays performed at Charles I’s court, was replaced by the bitterness of coping with this deprivation, which informs plays performed for Charles II. Importantly, the “cross-over” comedies not only anticipate the problems of surviving a war, but also ask what might replace material wealth in a post-war society. The comedies

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<sup>219</sup> John Evelyn had immediate experience of the King’s unbounded enthusiasm for the sciences:

‘6 March 1661. To *Lond[on]*: to our *Society*; whither his *Majestie* had sent a small piece of Glasse .....which though strock with an hamer at the oval end would not breake, but breaking the taile or small part with your hand, & which was not much bigger than [a] small pin, the whole would crumble to dust in your hand:The reason was considered, but so many objections made, as was hard to Solve.’ Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed.by E.S. de Beer, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), III, p 272.

which writers chose to restage in the Restoration provide an interesting answer to this question through their discussion of the nature and function of wit.

The term “wit” was in common parlance well before the Restoration, and was to become particularly associated with the later seventeenth-century through the development of stereotypical characters known as “wits” – together with their opposites, the “fops” and “beaux.” Restoration comic authors brought these characters to the public stage, but, as the “cross-over” comedies show, wit had already been a subject for discussion by authors writing in the 1620s and 1630s. Davenant in particular explores and contrasts two definitions of Wit: as a characteristic, and as a tool. The former definition is tested against the latter, as the characters who would most like to be thought Wits are shown to be fools by those who use Wit as a tool against them.

There are just under thirty definitions of wit in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, several of which were current throughout the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. “Wit” implies cleverness or a particular sharpness, and its essential shape-shifting means that it could be a noun, a verb or an adjective. Wit can be achieved both through labour and through luck; sometimes it results from careful thought and construction, but sometimes it can result from a happy turn of phrase. The nebulous quality of Wit which Davenant attempted to define was capable of a variety of meanings and interpretations. It could apply equally well to painting, sculpture, music or writing, but it was always connected with the arts. For Davenant, Wit possessed a quasi-divine quality requiring admiration and worship:

Wit flies beyond the limits of that Law,  
By which our Sculptors grave, or Painters draw,

And Statuaries up to Nature grow;  
 Who all their strokes of Life to Poets owe.  
 Their Art can make no shape for Wit to wear;  
 It is divine and can no Image bear.  
 None by description can that Soul express,  
 Yet all must the effects of it confess.<sup>220</sup>

True Wit, in Davenant's description, simply *is*; it is not something which can be learned by rote, nor is the poet able fully to control and manipulate it to his own ends. Wit can be perceived in works of art, but gives the impression that it has been created spontaneously. It is a quality whose possession in varying amounts enables its owner to impress others by his brilliance. (At this time, Wit was considered overwhelmingly to be a masculine quality.) Davenant continually expressed his devotion to Wit in religious terms. His faith in Wit's divinity was indeed stronger and more consistent than his faith in the Church, which he was able to overlook when it was politically advantageous.<sup>221</sup> This belief underpins his development of the theme of literary inheritance, expressed most strongly in the cult of "Shakespeare the National Poet" of which Davenant was the originator. Davenant might change his religious or political allegiance with ease, but his devotion to Wit was constant. As Steven N Zwicker comments: 'In Davenant's rhapsody, wit is transformed from intellectual propriety into the defining quality

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<sup>220</sup> William Davenant, *Poem to the Earl of Orrery*, (1673), in *Sir William Davenant: The Shorter Poems, and Songs from the Plays and Masques*, ed. by A.M.Gibbs, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 115, ll 323 – 30.

<sup>221</sup> Davenant converted from Protestantism to Catholicism in the 1630s, signalling his devotion to Henrietta Maria and her court. However, he was also able to make deals with Cromwell during the 1650s, demonstrating a strong talent for persuasion.

of all proper intellectual and spiritual activity: it combines reason and instinct; it is at once luck and labor, dexterity and application, design and memory.’<sup>222</sup>

In contrast to the flamboyant Royalist Davenant, his dramatic collaborator and erstwhile Parliamentarian, John Dryden, developed the idea of Wit as a tool, something useful or achievable as a result of great effort, rather than a semi-divine quality bestowed by God on a fortunate few. In his prologue to *The Wild Gallant* (1669), for example, Dryden painted a picture of Wit as a material possession, passed from poet to poet as part of a long literary inheritance:

Our Poet yet protection hopes from you,  
But bribes you not with anything that’s new.  
Nature is old, which Poets imitate,  
And for Wit, those that boast their own estate,  
Forget *Fletcher* and *Ben* before them went,  
Their Elder Brothers, and that vastly spent.<sup>223</sup>

Just as material property, the estate, had once been transferred by father to son, uncle to nephew, brother to brother, within the family, Dryden implies that wit can be passed on from (literary) father to son, as part of their legacy. The immediate family of poets, separated not by centuries but merely by generations - the “Sons of Ben” Jonson – Richard Brome, James Shirley, and later Thomas Shadwell – share and pass on the legacy of Wit. Wit is not a material estate; it is a tool, a means of survival and also a means to gain material wealth and property.

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<sup>222</sup> Zwicker, p. 22. Davenant discusses Wit in detail in his preface to his epic poem *Gondibert* (1650), dedicated to the philosopher and pragmatist Thomas Hobbes.

<sup>223</sup> John Dryden, *The Wild Gallant* (1669) in *The Works of John Dryden*, gen.ed. H.T.Swedenberg Jr. (Berkeley and Los Angeles; London: University of California Press. 1956 - 2000) VIII. p. 5, *Prologue*, 40-45.

This theory had first been developed in a correspondence between Dryden and Davenant in the early 1650s.<sup>224</sup>

If Wit can be used as a tool, or a means of survival, then seventeenth-century comedies frequently consider whether it is possible to live by Wit alone. This theme may have resonated particularly with those who had been recently dispossessed of their lands. Thus the “cross -over” comedies recall a moment of uncertainty, testing Wit’s power and usefulness in a post-Commonwealth society. Fletcher’s *Wit without Money* and Davenant’s *The Wits* both begin with the same premise: the gentleman landowner rejects his property and responsibilities in order to try living purely by his wits, and consequently deprives his younger brother of his inheritance. Both younger brothers are unwillingly drawn into this experiment before their elder brothers come to their senses and return affairs to their ‘natural’ order. Fletcher’s emphasis was on the social experiment of giving up property and material inheritance in order to test the possibilities of living by Wit alone; Valentine is a version of Shakespeare’s Timon of Athens, with a cynical view of his dependents and friends. His younger brother is presented with a situation where he loses his financial support, and has to learn quickly how to find a livelihood. Davenant’s emphasis is on Wit as the new currency, the only way in which younger sons can make a living. At the start of the play Young Pallatine, a mercenary like Cowley’s Cutter, has already honed his Wit in order to

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<sup>224</sup> James Anderson Winn discusses the strong influence of Davenant’s writings on the young and impressionable Dryden, and the latter’s imitation of *Gondibert* in his “Heroique Stanzas on Cromwell” (1659). The two poets shared and developed their concerns, especially ‘how properly to learn from the epic poetry of the past, how to be at once elevated and realistic, and how to define true wit’. James Anderson Winn, *John Dryden and His World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987) p. 73.

gain a wealthy mistress and a reasonably successful lifestyle in London. Davenant offers a more sophisticated version of Wit, arguing that it is an asset to be passed on from author to author as part of their dramatic legacy.

### ***The Wits and Wit Without Money***

One of the first “cross-over” comedies staged by Davenant was his own work, *The Wits*, initially staged in 1636. The title of Davenant’s comedy suggests that Wit may take someone over so completely that they are themselves completely defined by it. His discussion of survival, inheritance, and the possibility of living by one’s wits (rather than through investment in property) has particular resonance in post-war Restoration society. He also pokes fun at the neo-Platonic court established by Henrietta Maria, by naming his leading characters the two brothers Palatine. Like other contemporary court authors, Davenant had intended to question in the play’s initial staging whether the romantic idea of chivalric knights at the court of Charlemagne was likely to find realisation in the early modern court of Charles I. (It was certainly unlikely to do so at the even more modern court of Charles II.) The Queen had introduced the cult of neo-Platonism, and Davenant, as one of her favourites, formed part of her adoring male circle. Like other Caroline playwrights, including Thomas Killigrew, Davenant nevertheless mocked it in plays such as *The Platonic Lovers* (1636).<sup>225</sup> In the revival of *The Wits*, performed to the new and distinctly unplatonic audience of Charles II, Davenant’s critique of Henrietta Maria’s unworldliness is offset by a

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<sup>225</sup> Kevin Sharpe comments on the cult of neo-Platonism, and Caroline playwrights’ mockery of it, in *Criticism and Compliment*, p. 22-23.

nostalgic sense of pre-war days when life at court was apparently less troubled and more innocent.

The basis for the play's argument is similar to that in Fletcher's *Wit Without Money* (1639), which I touched upon in Chapter One. Although in the post-war, post-Interregnum Restoration world, the ownership of land and its passing down through aristocratic and landed gentry families had changed irrevocably, the restaging of plays which advocated the former hierarchical structure may have been deliberate propaganda; an attempt to remind audiences of the 'good old days' before the outbreak of Civil War.<sup>226</sup> It is also worth noting that *Wit Without Money* had been illicitly and briefly revived in 1648 and 1654 – an indication that this comedy was considered particularly likely by its performers to resonate with post-war audiences.<sup>227</sup> Both *Wit Without Money* and *The Wits* implicitly criticise the "bad" landlords, the selfish and irresponsible gentry who try to rid themselves of their lands and tenants and of the anxieties of property ownership. In *Wit Without Money* Valentine tries to sell off his estate and to live solely by his wits; his freedom is temporary, as, at the end of the play, it is revealed that he has failed to complete the sale. Valentine's social experiment of

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<sup>226</sup> 'Charles II recognised the propaganda value of theatre...the new playwrights...defended the traditional power-structure in an attempt to rehabilitate themselves and their culture.' Maguire, p. 3.

<sup>227</sup> Performances are recorded on 3 February 1648 and 30 December 1654 at the Red Bull Theatre in Clerkenwell. The December performance was interrupted by the authorities, and it seems possible that the February performance was also stopped. During the late 1640s and early 1650s the King's Men were possibly performing at the Salisbury Court playhouse, and also attempting to play at Blackfriars. Actors are recorded in 1647 as performing at Salisbury Court, the Cockpit and the Fortune playhouses, in defiance of the 1642 parliamentary ordinance forbidding stage-playing - although they were constantly stopped, sometimes arrested, sometimes fined, and sometimes had their costumes and props confiscated by the authorities. Hotson gives a detailed account in "Surreptitious Drama, 1642-1655", pp. 3-58.

living by his wits has led his puzzled friends to believe he has lost them, and in material terms he loses his money, his clothes, and all his possessions. His new transactional currency is measured out in others' good will:

*Vallentine:* Why all good men's my meanes, my wits my plow,  
The Townes my stock, Tavernes my standing house,  
And all the world knowes there's no want; all  
gentlemen  
That love society, love me.<sup>228</sup>

By making his protagonist completely penniless, Fletcher presents an extreme example of the attempt to survive by wit alone. Fletcher shows that fanatical idealism can have devastating effects: Valentine is less noble than selfish, and his judgement is essentially flawed.

As Davenant shows in *The Wits*, Elder Pallatine's Achilles heel is his spiritual vanity. Like the stereotypical Puritan, he makes claims to piety, humility and straightforwardness which are undermined by his desire to be respected for his religious nobility. His friend Sir Morglay Thwack comments to Young Pallatine:

*Thwack:* Your brother is a gentleman of a  
Most even and blessed composition, sir;  
His very blood is made of holy-water,  
Less salt than almond-milk.<sup>229</sup>

Throughout the comedy Davenant describes Elder Pallatine in terms of Catholic imagery. Fanatical about his theory of Wit, he is easily gulled by those

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<sup>228</sup> John Fletcher, *Wit Without Money*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler, in *The Dramatic Works of Beaumont and Fletcher*, general ed Fredson Bowers, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1966 - 1996), vi, I.1.156-159. Further references to this edition follow the quotations in the text.

<sup>229</sup> William Davenant, *The Wits* (1636), in *The Dramatic Works of Sir William Davenant*, eds James Maidment and William Logan (Edinburgh: William Paterson; London: Sotheman & Co., 1872), IV.ii. p.414. Further references to this edition follow the quotations in the text.



who play to his 'pious' qualities. His younger brother tries to challenge Elder Pallatine's decision though using vocabulary which he might understand, but does so in vain:

*Young Pallatine:* Your rents expos'd at home, for pious uses  
Must expiate your behaviour here. Tell me,  
Is that the subtle plot you have on heaven? (I.ii.p.362)

Valentine is also criticised for his selfishness towards his younger brother, Francisco, although Francisco is forced to rethink his own idealistic view of the world, as both brothers approach the problem of surviving by their wits in contrasting ways. When rebuked for depriving Francisco of his inheritance, Valentine is confident that they can live successfully by their wits:

*Valentine:* Pray save your labour sir,  
My brother and my selfe, will runne one fortune,  
And I thinke what I hold a mere vexation,  
Cannot be safe for him; I love him better,  
He has wit at will, the world has meanes, hee shall live  
Without this tricke of state, we are heires both,  
And all the world before us. (I.1, 221-227)

Valentine has treated his brother unkindly, disinheriting him without consultation. Similarly, the Elder Pallatine brother is unmoved by his younger brother's predicament, advising him to use his wit to survive:

*Elder Pallatine:*[... ]what should you do  
With land, that have a portion in your brain  
Above all legacies or heritage? (IV.i..p.398-399)

Although Davenant's Pallatine brothers have much in common with Fletcher's Valentine and Francisco, temperamentally they appear to be opposites. Francisco's lack of experience, which makes him such an innocent in the ways of

the world, is in strong contrast to Young Pallatine, whom Davenant depicts as a ruthless mercenary, using his wit to browbeat and scrounge a living from his mistress Lucy:

*Young Pallatine:* What money has thou, Luce?

*Lucy:* Ay, there's your business.

*Young Pallatine:* It is the business of the world. (I.i.p.356)

Davenant follows Jonson and Brome in his depiction of the country dweller Elder Pallatine as gullible, slow and stupid, while Young Pallatine has become clever and worldly by his exposure to city life.

At his first appearance, Francisco apparently embodies the idealized view of human nature which Valentine so admires as he reiterates the strong blood ties which mean he must forgive Valentine's selfishness:

*Francisco:* ... he is my brother -

And though he hold him slight, my most dear brother -

A gentleman, excepting some few rubbes,

He were too excellent to live here else,

Fraughted as deepe with noble and brave parts,

The issues of a noble and manly spirit

As any he alive...

Though I am miserable, and he made me so,

Yet still he is my brother, still I love him,

And to that tye of blood linke my affections. (I.2.56-65)

Valentine, as depicted by the hero-worshipping Francisco in an echo of Horatio's eulogy of the noble prince Hamlet, has 'noble and brave parts', 'a noble and manly spirit', the traits which make up 'A gentleman, excepting some few rubbes'. This strong filial devotion makes Francisco more immediately sympathetic than Valentine, but Fletcher questions his strength of character. Francisco's naiveté, as a scholar, makes him resemble an innocent abroad, incapable of looking after his own interests:

*Francisco:* I am fit,  
 But who'll take me thus? mens miseries are now  
 Accounted staines in their natures. I have travelled,  
 And I have studded long, observed all kingdoms,  
 Know all the promises of Art and manners,  
 Yet that I am not bold, nor cannot flatter,  
 I shall not thrive, all these are but vaine Studdies  
 (I.1.42-48)

Valentine's own question, 'Whats my knowledge Uncle / Ist not worth money?' (I.1.181-2) is therefore answered by Fletcher through his characterisation of Francisco who appears seriously disadvantaged by his honesty, and his lack of wit and worldly knowledge, making him ultimately dependent for his happiness on the kindness of others. This, however, fits in with Valentine's idealistic portrait of a utopian society where men and women are able to live harmoniously, in a world which needs no rules and social structure:

*Vallentine:* Besides these wayes, to teach the way of nature,  
 A manly love, community to all  
 That are deservers, not examining  
 How much, or whats done for them. (I.1.189-190)

Valentine's desire to establish a Utopian society where all have equal opportunities, and where wealth is measured by generosity of character rather than land, was a popular topic in pre-Civil War tracts, pamphlets, and plays. As Robert Appelbaum comments, 'utopian politics as exercised in seventeenth-century England.... [were] always grounded in literary expression. And by that same token, utopian literature in the seventeenth century... was always grounded in the political conflicts of the day.'<sup>230</sup> In Davenant's *The Wits* the Elder Pallatine

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<sup>230</sup> Appelbaum, *Literature and Utopian Politics*, p. 1. Appelbaum has summarized the way in which utopianism responded to and developed during the reigns of the Stuarts: from James I's creation of an absolutist rule against which the utopists

expresses similar views, contrasting the laborious life of the worker with the more attractive life of the intellectual, able simply to exist rather than earning a living:

*Elder Pallatine:* Oh, to live here, i'th' fair metropolis  
 Of our great isle, a free inheritor  
 Of ev'ry modest, or voluptuous wish  
 Thy young desires can breathe; and not oblig'd  
 To th' ploughman's toils, or lazy reaper's sweat;  
 To make the world thy farm, and ev'ry man,  
 Less witty than thyself, tenant for life;  
 These are the glories that proclaim a true  
 Philosophy and soul in him that climbs  
 To reach them with neglect of fame and life. (IV.i.p.399)

Valentine's cynical suspicion of the possibility of establishing a utopian republic contrasts with the Elder Pallatine's idealism. Here again is the emphasis on 'inheritance' - this time, the passing on of feelings or understandings which are available only to the elite courtier rather than the labourer, who must spend his time in the field. Elder Pallatine's desire to make every man less witty than himself 'tenant for life' expresses the utopian ruler's desire for mastery over his subjects; in this case, the desire remains unfulfilled as Elder Pallatine is gulled by the truly witty characters in the play. Similarly, the self-deluded Peregrine in Richard Brome's *The Antipodes* (1636) is gulled into believing he is experiencing an Anti-England Utopia, which in fact exists only as a fictional product of his imagination.

Fletcher also criticises Valentine by showing his willingness to undermine his friends in their suit for the rich widow Lady Hartwell. Valentine openly

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could react, through Charles I's disastrous challenge to parliamentary attempts to establish a more Utopian government at a time when New World colonization contrasted favourably with the troubles at home, and to Charles II, a *faux*-Utopian monarch created and maintained by his people.

exploits his friends' good natured generosity in order to live by his wits, betrays the homosociality which underpins their relationship:

*Vallentine:* You are my friends,  
 And all my loving friends, I spend your money,  
 Yet I deserve it too, you are my friendes still,  
 I ride your horses, when I want I sell um;  
 I eate your meate, helpe to weare your linnen [...] (II.2.101-105)

The bulk of Davenant's satire is directed against Elder Pallatine and his friend Sir Morglay Thwack. Like Fletcher, he criticises his protagonists for their selfish desertion of their dependants, their abdication of the responsibility of landlords, and their determination to prove their "humourous odd philosophy" that man can live entirely by his wits and has no need of material support. The gullible Thwack, convinced by his friend, promotes the gospel of Wit:

*Thwack:* 'Tis possible to live b'our wits; that is  
 As evident as light. No human learning  
 Shall advise me from that faith. (IV.ii.p.414)

Tellingly, Thwack's belief in Wit is a subjective instinctive response, and he refuses to use intelligence (which is the true hallmark of a Wit) in order to harness scholarship in defence of his credo. Unsurprisingly, he is later proved to be foolish rather than witty.

Like Valentine, Elder Pallatine and Sir Morgly Thwack find that their idealizing of "wit" fails to stand up. Young Pallatine, unlike Francisco, finds a way to use his wits to survive, as he tells Thwack:

*Young Pallatine:* You'd be his disciple and follow him  
 In a new path, unknown to his own feet.  
 Yet I've walk'd in it since, and prosper'd, as  
 You see, without or land or tenement. (IV.ii.p.414)

Although Young Pallatine is clever, he has not been successful in making his own fortune out of using his wit, but is dependent on his mistress's generosity. Her friend, the heiress Lady Ample, appears to have more wisdom and a better strategy than Young Pallatine, but he merely attributes her cleverness to her money:

*Young Pallatine:* Men are not wise without it, for it makes  
 Wisdom known; and to be a fool, and poor.  
 Is next t'old aches and bad fame (I.i.p.356)

According to Young Pallatine, money naturally endows the owner with moral fibre, wit, accomplishments and happiness. Davenant shows the evils of taking this doctrine too far in the person of Sir Tyrant Thrift, Lady Ample's miserly guardian, who counterbalances the profligate Sir Morgly Thwack. When told of the death of his ward, Thrift is less concerned with showing proper respect than on minimising the funeral expenses.

If the Pallatine brothers find that living by one's wits is in fact no substitute for money, Davenant also ridicules the female characters whose apparent power is undermined by their lack of wit. He sets out the argument generally in the steward Engine's description of the strategy Elder Pallatine and Sir Morgly Thwack openly profess they will follow in town:

*Engine:* They will immure themselves  
 With diamonds, with all refulgent stones  
 That merit price. Ask'em, who pays? Why, ladies.  
 They'll feast with rich provencal wines. Who pays?  
 Ladies. They'll shine in various habit, like  
 Eternal bridegrooms of the day. Ask'em  
 Who pays. Ladies. Lie with those ladies too,  
 And pay'em but with issue male, that shall  
 Inherit nothing but their wit, and do  
 The like to ladies, when they grow to age. (II.i.p.367)

Engine's questions are all answered by the thudding response, 'Who will pay? Ladies.' As Thwack comments, 'I come to borrow where I'll never lend, /And buy what I'll never pay for.' (I.ii.p,359) Davenant shows how the power of rich ladies is exploited by unscrupulous male followers. Their payment is not a proof of their power over the men, but rather proof of the way in which the men can persuade money out of them.

This argument is illustrated by the key characters. Young Pallatine persuades Lucy to give him money, a lapse in her wit which Lady Ample strongly criticises:

*Ample:* This, Luce, is such apostacy in wit  
 As nature must degrade herself in woman to  
 Forgive. Shall love put thee to charge? Could'st thou  
 Permit thy lover to become thy pensioner?  
 [...]  
 Thy feature and thy wit are wealth enough  
 To keep thee high in all these vanities  
 That wild ambition, or expensive pride  
 Perform in youth, but thou invert'st their use.  
 Thy lover, like the foolish adamant,  
 The steel, thou fiercely dost allure and draw  
 To spend thy virtue, not to get by it.

*Lucy:* This doctrine, madam, is but new to me.

*Ample:* How have I liv'd, think'st thou? E'en by my wits. (II.i.p.366)

In Lady Ample's argument, women are cleverer and wittier than men; Lucy has betrayed her sex by allowing her lover to live at her expense. It is Lucy's duty, according to Lady Ample, to 'redeem the credit of your sex'; women who indulge men allow them to indulge their natural selfishness. Lady Ample herself is under siege from the Elder Pallatine, who decides to pursue her to secure her money by the brilliance of his wit:

*Elder Pallatine:* Now for the Lady Ample. She, I guess,  
 Looks on me with strong fervent eyes. She's rich,

And could I work her into profit, 'twould  
Procure my wit immortal memory. (III.iii.p.396)

Davenant undermines Lady Ample's reproach to Lucy by having her succumb to Elder Pallatine; because Lucy is genuinely attached to Young Pallatine, her love rescues and redeems him. Lady Ample finds that her heart is not as ruled by her head as she had formerly believed, although she is not an easy prize for Elder Pallatine to win.

Davenant has shown how his characters operate by their wits, and how they survive with varying degrees of success. Elder Pallatine is ridiculed and gulled by his brother and his clever witty associates Pert and Meager. Thwack, formerly a keen disciple of Elder Pallatine's gospel of wit, comes to realise that living with wit rather than money is not easy; at the end of the play he settles his inheritance upon Young Pallatine, with the assurance that 'Though I love your wit, you shall not [have to] live by it.' (V.iv.p. 431). Lady Ample and Lucy, although possessing wit enough to protect their fortunes, find it undermined by their genuine feelings for their lovers. Wit as a tool therefore may assist survival, but Davenant shows it to be useful only temporarily, assisting the characters in adversity to achieve their long-term desires for love and financial security.

In *Wit Without Money* Fletcher also shows that Wit's power is temporary. Having demonstrated the selfishness of Valentine's idealism, which has led him to disinherit his brother, abandon his tenants, and 'put the times out of joynt' by trying to sell his lands down the class scale to the Merchant, Fletcher sets all straight again at the end of the comedy. Valentine is forced to learn that the social order, however flawed, must be restored, and realises that his younger brother has



now become his witty superior. Francisco beats Valentine to the altar by marrying Lady Heartwell's younger sister, the level-headed Isabella:

*Vallentine:* Come *Francke* rejoice with me, thou hast got the start  
 boy,  
 But ile so tumble after, come my friends leade,  
 Lead chearefully, and let your fiddles ring boyes,  
 My follies and my fancies have an end here,  
 Display the mortgage *Lance*, Merchant ile pay you,  
 And everything shall be in joynt agen.  
*Uncle:* Afore, afore.  
*Vallentine:* And now confesse, and knowe,  
 Wit without Money, sometimes gives the blow.  
 (V.5.43-50)

The final line provides an interesting conclusion to this comedy. Although Valentine acknowledges that 'My follies and my fancies have an end here', he goes out defiantly, still arguing that his experiment has been a breath of fresh air, a challenge to society's expectations. But the world which has been turned topsy-turvy by Valentine's behaviour is reassuringly 'set in joint age', a reaffirmation of the social order which might be expected to have particular resonance for the post-war Restoration audience.

In the 1661 version, Elder Pallatine, like Valentine in *Wit Without Money*, remains convinced that living by one's wits is a valid and acceptable choice. In the 1673 version, however, he concedes that this is not a successful way to survive, as the revisions to the closing lines of the play demonstrate:

*Elder Pallatine:* First, to the church; lady;  
 I'll make your skittish person sure. Some of  
 Your pleasant arts upon me may become  
 A wise example, and a moral too;  
*Such as their haughty fancy well befits,*  
*That undertake to live here by their wits.* [V.iv. p.432, 1661]

This is changed to:

*Elder Pallatine:* First, to the church; lady;  
 I'll make your skittish person sure. Some of  
 Your pleasant arts upon me may become  
 A wise example, and a moral too  
*To shew that their design but seldom hits,*  
*Who aim to live in splendour by their wits.*<sup>231</sup> [V.iii, p.243, 1673]

The emphasis in these versions shifts slightly. In the 1661 text, the 'moral' is directed against those whose 'haughty fancy' gives them confidence to live by their wits. In the 1673 text the moral is directed only against those who 'aim to live in splendour' by these means, implying that living by Wit is not in itself reprehensible. It is the ends to which these means are directed that needs to be questioned. Davenant revises his argument to show an understanding of those who have to live by their wits, as many did in the war years; it is only those who wish to profit by it who are criticised.

Another alteration from the 1636/1661 text to the 1673 text is worth noting. Young Pallatine is given a couple of lines at the end of Act 1 which develop his character as more cynical and manipulative than in the original version in which he declares:

*Young Pallatine:* [...] This devil plenty thrusts  
 Strange boldness upon men... Though sullen want, the enemy  
 Of wit, have sunk her low, if pregnant wine  
 Can raise her up, this day she shall be mine. (I.ii.p.363)

This is changed to:

*Young Pallatine:* [...] if my design succeeds,  
 I'll turn to solid gold their airy dreams:  
 They by their wits shall live, and I by them. (I.ii.p.227)

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<sup>231</sup> William Davenant, *The Wits* (1636), Act V, eds Maidment and Logan, II, p 224, and discussed by the editors on p.243.

The lines which they replace in the 1661 version portrayed Young Pallatine as forced by circumstances to become an opportunist. Although there is a conditional clause – ‘*if my design succeeds*’ – Young Pallatine now portrays himself unashamedly as a parasite, feeding upon his mistress and brother. In depicting the increasingly materialistic side of Restoration society, the republished text concludes that wit is not enough to live on, and that money counts.

The late seventeenth-century authors were anxious to define and pin down the elusive quality of Wit. As writers sought to link themselves more closely to the immediate past, to the “Golden Age” of Jonson and Shakespeare, Wit was increasingly depicted as the natural inheritance of the Restoration author.

According to Dryden:

With joy we bring what our dead Authors writ,  
And beg from you the value of their Wit,  
That *Shakespeare’s*, *Fletcher’s*, and great *Johnson’s* claim  
May be Renew’d from those who gave them fame.<sup>232</sup>

The cross-over comedies provide an important bridge between the early seventeenth-century comedies where Wit can be discussed, admired and analysed as a quality, and the later ‘witty’ comedies by Restoration authors such as Wycherley, Shadwell and Congreve. Their comedies emphasise the personification of wit so that the stereotype of “the Wit” eventually comes to destroy the verbal freshness and cleverness which is its attraction. At the same time, in the early 1660s, a more negative view of the “Wit” was briefly displayed (as I will now show) in the character of the “Cheat”.

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<sup>232</sup> John Dryden, *Prologue to the University of Oxford* (1674), in *The Works of John Dryden*, ed H.T. Swedenberg Jr. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1962), I.p. 147, l 19 – 22.

### *The Cheats*

John Wilson's comedy *The Cheats* was written in 1662, performed in 1663 by the King's Company at the Theatre Royal, Bridges Street, and published in 1664. By 1662 Killigrew and Davenant had begun to establish their company personnel and so Wilson was able to write characters with specific actors in mind. John Lacy played the part of the Puritan Scruple and this became one of his most well known roles.<sup>233</sup> Wilson is stronger on character than stagecraft; the text of *The Cheats* suggests that the opportunities for comedy were centred in the dialogue and further developed by adlibbing in performance, rather than in the action (although some moments of physical comedy are recorded in the stage directions.) This play was one of the first comedies to be written during the Restoration period, and although not a "cross-over" comedy, it is important in re-stating later seventeenth-century comedy. Wilson looks back to the Jacobean city comedies, developing a broad satirical commentary on London society and morality during the Protectorate, rather than homing in on specific satirical targets.

Acknowledging in the preface that his play contains nothing new – 'there is hardly any thing left to write upon, but what either the Antients or Moderns have some way or other touch'd on' (*Preface* sig. A2v) – Wilson links himself with Jonson, as an author whose source material is drawn from the classical writers:

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<sup>233</sup> Between 1668-70 Lacy was painted by John Michael Wright at Charles II's request in three of his most famous roles – Sauny the Scot (from Lacy's own adaptation of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* (acted 1667, published 1698); Monsieur Device from the Duke of Newcastle's comedy *The Country Captain* (1649); and Scruple from Wilson's *The Cheats* (1664).

Did not *Apuleius* take the rise of his *Golden Asse*, from *Lucian's Lucius*; and *Erasmus*, his *Alcumistica*, from *Chaucer's Canon Yeomans Tale*: and *Ben. Johnson*, his more happy *Alchymist*, from both? <sup>234</sup>

When he later somewhat disingenuously denies that he is imitating Jonson,

Wilson in fact implicitly allies himself with him through his denial:

We've no Sententious Sir ----- No grave Sir Poll;  
No little Pugge, nor Devil ----- Bless us All:  
No tedious Sieges to the Musick-room;  
Nor frisks abroad – No – Our Scene's all at home: (*Prologue*, 7 – 10) <sup>235</sup>

*The Cheats* appears to be derivative of *The Alchemist* and of *Bartholomew Fair* in particular; its setting in London inevitably invites comparison with Jonson and Brome's pre-Civil War city comedies. Wilson is looking back to Jonson, but also forward to new style of writing and new forms of comedy. The characters (adulterers, charlatans and gulls), themes (the power of wealth and the need to resort to deception in order to survive), and the play's staging (a series of encounters between groups of satirised characters) all echo Jonson. However Wilson's dialogue is more explicitly topical than Jonson's, and his depiction of "types" operating in the Protectorate years represents as a particular form of 'Restoration' satire, one which authors such as John Tatham were developing, and which I discuss in the following chapter.

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<sup>234</sup> John Wilson, *The Cheats*, (London, 1664), *The Author, to the Reader*, sig. A2v. Further references to this edition follow the quotations in the text.

<sup>235</sup> The 'Sententious Sir' is the Puritan Zeal-of-the-Land Busy in *Bartholomew Fair* (1614); 'Sir Poll' is Sir Politick Would-be from *Volpone* (1606); 'Pugge' is the little devil from *The Devil is an Ass* (1616). The 'frisks abroad' occur in *Volpone*. The Canon of Christ Church and Archdeacon of Chichester, the minor dramatist Jasper Mayne, praised Jonson for not laying 'tedious Sieges to the Musick-room', a phrase which Wilson may have assumed was familiar to his audience.

In *The Cheats* Wilson depicts a London society which is fractured and unstable. Representatives of all classes are relying on deceit in order to maintain their wealth, or simply to survive. The characters are defined, not as in the Jacobean city comedies by their “humours”, but by their occupations, although Wilson implies that their choice of occupation has been influenced by their personalities. For example the lawyer Ranter is pompous, overly attentive to detail, supporting every jot and tittle of unreasonably complex laws, and unable to interpret individual cases as a result. His lecture on the complications of sequestration to his protégé, Tyro, is a typically lengthy speech, in which the actor uses the letters of the alphabet as cue-cards:

*Ranter: Abigail, a seme sole, seis'd in tail, of the Mannor of Blackacre, makes a Feoffment in Fee to Cutbeard, upon condition, that if Daniel shall release Emmanuel of, and from all actions relating to Ferdinand, that then Gregory, shall satisfie Humphrey, of, and for all marriage portions intended by Jeremy, to be given Knipperdoling, with his Wifes Daughter Lettice; which, Maximillian perceiving, and believing that Nicholas had a more than ordinary influence upon Oliver, procures Peter, to discharge Quintillian, and engage Rowland, to estate his wife Susan, in the capital message of Tounghwell, (with a certain Salt-marsh, and Underwoods thereunto belonging) and stop his daughter Ursela's mouth, with a wind-mill, and a Water-mill, left her by her Mother; whereupon Winifred, having lately recover'd in a praecontract, against Xenophon, makes a Lease to Younger, who releases to Zachary, who enters upon Abigal, who re-enters upon him, and ejecting him out of the Premises, furnishes principal Evidences – And now Sir, what think you: - where has this man his Remedy?*

*Tyro: I should think sir, he were gone at Common law. (2.5.pp. 28-29)*

Echoing Cowley's *Guardian*, Wilson exposes the cumbersome machinery of the law which had developed during the years following the Civil War. Like Cowley he also depicts a common “type”: the deceitful soldier. In Wilson's play two hectors, Bilboe and Titere Tu, attempt (rarely successfully) to lie and cheat

their way through peacetime London. Like Cutter and Worm they assume fake identities as soldiers:

*Bilboe:* Did not I pick thee up, at a three-penny Ordinary, brought you into Gentlemens company; Dub'd you a Knight of the Blade; Taught you the method of making new plots, and borrowing half a Crown of your Landlady, upon the hopes of 'em; And after all this, sign'd your Certificate, to make you capable, of those Arrears, you never fought for.  
(4.1.p. 46)

Wilson overturns the Jonsonian theme of gullible citizens being deceived by cunning professional thieves; Bilboe and Titere Tu are inefficient liars and cheats, while the London citizens whom they attempt to gull are far more knowledgeable and worldly. The deceptively sober and upright alderman Whitebroth is operating a financial scam, aided by his reluctant servant Timothy:

*Whitebroth:* Have you receiv'd the Jews money? And sent him the Pack of Left-handed Gloves, I order'd you.

*Tim:* Yes Sir – 'Tis done.

*Whitebroth:* Put tricks upon me! - Make me buy a round parcel of Gloves, and now you know I have 'um by me, if I will not have a third part of the money, you have occasion but for half of 'um, and be hang'd. – I'll Jew you, with a Horse-pox – I have receiv'd half your money, and you shall have half the Gloves (that is to say) all the Left-handed ones - You may chance to truck 'um off, with maim'd Souldiers, if not, I'll make you pay sawce for t'other – (3.2.pp. 34-35)<sup>236</sup>

In this world of cheats and shams, as the Puritan divine Scruple notes, the only sin is getting trapped or caught out :

*Scruple:* If a man promises, and had no intention to perform when he made it, he is not oblig'd, unless there be an Oath, or Contract in the case.  
(5.4.p. 72)

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<sup>236</sup> "The rascals excel because they recognise the greed of everyone else. Pursuit of guilt is universal in London city comedy, and as always the most avaricious are the easiest to con." (Griswold, p.20.)

Wilson uses Scruple's constant haranguing of the other characters to draw the traditional picture of the Puritans as hypocritical and false moralists. The son of a royalist Anglican divine, Wilson is well-placed to expose Scruple's religious pretensions, implying that, as a Puritan, he cannot have any knowledge of the Church's "mother tongue", Latin. He belittles Scruple by using a small boy to expose his ignorance:

*Boy:* Please you give me leave to ask you one word.

*Scruple:* With all my heart Child - What is't?

*Boy:* What's the English of *Adolescentior*?

*Scruple:* *Adolescentior*! Hum - *Adolescentior*? - Haw! - *Adolescentior* -! That is as much to say - *Adolescentior*; - (Now fye Child! Ask questions with that dirty face! - Go wash it Child - Go wash it: - Fye Child! Fye! )

*Boy:* It signifies a Ladder, *Adolescens*, a Lad; *Adolescentiae*, a Ladder.

(3.3.pp. 36-37)

Wilson's satire works on two levels; it illustrates the Biblical proverb that "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings" comes an insight into the truth. However, Wilson implies that his audience is complicit in accepting Scruple's surface persona, when the truth of his ignorance was always evident – just as, in Hans Christian Anderson's fable, the Emperor's court ignore his nakedness, until one small boy points it out. By allowing Scruple (and by inference, the Puritans) to continue without challenge, Wilson suggests that the audience is conspiring in their own deceit. His specific attack on the Commonwealth society with its cumbersome laws, its hypocritical Puritans, and charlatan magicians such as Mopus, lays the blame at the door of the gullible, superstitious post-war society which allowed them to flourish. As Mopus points out, as long as there are fools in the world, why should they not be taken advantage of?:

*Mopus:* - I'll be plain with you – Examine the World, and you'll find three quarters of't, down-right fools: And for the rest, six parts in seven, are little, besides band, and beard, and yet they make a great bustle in the



World, and pass for shrewd men – And can you blame me then? – Am I the  
 onlie man in fault? – The worst you can say, is, The people, have so little  
 wit, as to give me money: and I, am so mad, as to pocket the injurie: –  
 Does this satisfie? (4.2.p. 52)

Wilson encourages the audience to question what they see. Scruple's  
 ambivalent attitude to the plays and playhouses he claims to abhor is, Wilson  
 implies, a more truthful portrait of actual Puritan attitudes towards the theatre:

*Scruple*: To see the frailty of mans Nature! – How weary of every thing  
 that is good! How irksome it is unto us! – I dare undertake, he should have  
 sate at a lewd Stage-play, a whole Afternoon: – Nay, with his Hat off too –  
 and – Ah! – been nev'r the worse.

*Mrs Whitebroth*: But are these Stage-plays, such lewd things as you make  
 them?

*Scruple*: Nay – They are not – For you will find good moral Things in  
 them. I have often Lectur'd, at'um, in a morning, and yet in the afternoon,  
 stol'n behind a Pillar, to hear 'um. (1.5.pp. 14-15)

Added to the double layer of Scruple's surface protestations (as opposed to  
 his actual opinions) is the third layer of this complex interpretation – for these  
 words are spoken by Lacy the actor, apparently attacking his own profession.  
 Killigrew and Cowley had played with the relationship between actor and  
 spectator, the actor stepping out of character to address the audience, or  
 commenting on how the plot affects his story. Wilson does not bring Scruple out  
 of character; instead, he expects the audience to realise and enjoy the triple  
 meaning of some of this theatrical moment.

The text of *The Cheats* is sexually explicit in places, and this probably  
 reflects Lacy's performance. Scruple incites his female followers to sexual  
 incontinence and promiscuity; his onstage trance contains wildly extravagant  
 prophecies and whips his acolytes into a sexual frenzy. He himself achieves  
 orgasmic ecstasy as the cries of 'Aa', 'Ah' indicate in the text:

*[The women answer him, with a long drawn -Hui.*

*Scruple: -Do but consider, what acting, wonder-working, advancing, and Christian-comforting times, these were: -How the rebuke of the poor, bely'd, slander'd people, was taken away, and their Reputation clear'd! - Ah – Ah – What great things were wrought upon the spirits of men, even through the bowels of difficulty! – Aa – Antichrist was dying in his limbs, nay dying upwards; And this Kingdom that was once so given up to it, that it was call'd, The Popes Ass – Ah – How was it become (as the Assembly most happily found it out) the chief of the Ten Horns, that were to gore the Whore: -Ah -Aa - Good people do not fear -There are more Assemblies coming, and more Purses opening, to carry on the work – [...] (3.5.p 44)*

The implicit sexuality of this speech, recorded not through the actual words but through the gasps – ‘Ah’ – is unusually explicit for a seventeenth-century text, and signals the way forward for ‘new’ Restoration comedies where sexual encounters are more overtly depicted.<sup>237</sup>

In *The Cheats* Wilson develops the format of the traditional city comedy to show characters defined by their occupations rather than their “humours”, and whose actions are dictated by their situations rather than their personalities. He challenges Davenant’s portrait of the ‘Wit’ who lies and cheats in a more acceptable way, either because he is discredited and does not achieve his aims, because he cheats with a certain charm, or because he causes no lasting harm to others. Wilson shows the negative side of the ‘Wit’, the unscrupulous “Cheat” who does not care who he hurts. In this regard, he echoes Cowley’s

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<sup>237</sup> For example, Wycherley’s *The Country Wife* (1675), with its deliberately punning title, and the famous ‘China’ scene, with its sustained *double entendre* as the rake Horner (again a punning name) fakes impotency in order to seduce various married women. Etherege’s *The Man of Mode* (1676) depicts the encounters of Dorimant (loosely based on the notorious John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester), and Shadwell’s *The Libertine* (1675) and *The Woman Captain* (1676) which include explicit sexual imagery. Colley Cibber’s *Love’s Last Shift* (1696) echoes this genre, when Amanda disguises herself as a high-class courtesan although in this case she seduces her own husband Loveless, with whom she spends a passionate night.

uncompromising realism in *Cutter of Coleman Street*. Like Tatham and Killigrew, Wilson replaces Caroline courtly comedies' reliance on symbolism and artificial appearance with sharp satirical comedy which emphasises reality and topicality, developing the comic style of Jonson and Brome to fit the post-war Commonwealth London of which he had more immediate experience. *The Cheats* is not a "cross-over" play, but reflects in interesting ways the social reality of the 1660s and its radical difference from the Puritan "cross-over" years. Its vicious satire makes it very much a Commonwealth comedy, a particular form of writing which flourished briefly, as I will argue in the next chapter, during the 1640s – 1660s, before it was neutralised by the introduction of 'witty' comedies.

#### Chapter Four: The ‘first Restoration comedies’

John Tatham’s *The Rump* has been called by Derek Hughes ‘the first Restoration comedy of all’, and for the purposes of this thesis deserves close consideration, becoming a “cross-over” comedy through its adaptation by Aphra Behn as *The Roundheads* (1682).<sup>238</sup> In this chapter I will however argue that a “cross-over” comedy written by Tatham’s contemporary, Thomas Jordan, has a better claim to be called ‘the first Restoration and eighteenth-century comedy’. It is particularly interesting to trace the development of two writers who both wrote plays and entertainments for London in the shape of the Lord Mayors’ pageants in the Commonwealth period and after the Restoration, and yet who each shaped English comedy in rather different ways.<sup>239</sup> John Tatham produced a metropolitan satire which was immediately sharper and more specific than his predecessors; Thomas Jordan influenced the comedies of William Wycherley and Thomas Shadwell, and looked ahead to the popular comedies of the eighteenth-century poet and dramatist John Gay.

Hyder E. Rollins has affirmed that ‘The important part [Jordan] played in keeping theatrical performances alive has not yet, perhaps, been fully

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<sup>238</sup> Derek Hughes, *The Theatre of Aphra Behn*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2001), p. 139. Further references to this source will be given in the form of the author’s name and page number. Hughes makes the point that *The Rump* was performed before Charles II actually returned to England.

<sup>239</sup> Identified by Martin Butler as part of the group of writers involved with the Red Bull company before the apparent closure of the theatres, Tatham was one of the only three authors to survive into the 1650s (the other two being Alexander Brome and Thomas Jordan). He and Jordan were the only two to write entertainments and civic shows, and to see their work staged in the early 1660s. Tatham contributed *The Royal Oak*, and the *London’s Triumph* pageants between 1657-64, and the pageant to celebrate Charles II’s return, *London’s Glory*, presented on 5 July 1660. Jordan wrote a *Comical Entertainment for the Lord Mayor and Aldermen* (1659), and contributed to the *London’s Triumph* series, but these were not published until the 1670s. ( Butler, p. 185.)

appreciated', and scholars have tended to pay less critical attention to Jordan's work than to Tatham's, finding Jordan instead to be a versatile practical man of the theatre – boy actor and female impersonator, book-keeper and author.<sup>240</sup> This chapter aims to position Jordan as a particularly significant “cross-over” playwright. *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon* was licensed on 2 August 1641 by the Master of the Revels Sir Henry Herbert. According to the title page of the first printed version in 1657, the comedy was particularly popular, being ‘publikely Acted 19 dayes together with extraordinary Applause.’<sup>241</sup> It was restaged in 1662, ahead of its reprinting in 1663. Yet its author remains in Tatham's shadow, known more for his celebratory masques than for his comedies, although his “cross-over” comedy establishes him as a highly important and influential dramatist of the period.

Jordan was the only “cross-over” author who was an experienced ex-actor. Like Killigrew, he demonstrates the instincts of an entertainer as he develops his comedy further than authors who were writers rather than performers, and anticipates the early eighteenth-century ‘ballad opera’ musicals of John Gay, *The*

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<sup>240</sup> Hyder E. Rollins, ‘The Commonwealth Drama: Miscellaneous Notes’ *Studies in Philology* 20.1 (1923), 52-69 (p.63). Susan Wiseman has briefly discussed Jordan in *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War*, while Lucy Munro has given a brief resume of Jordan's contribution to the Red Bull Theatre in ‘Governing the Pen to the Capacity of the Stage: Reading the Red Bull and Clerkenwell’. Munro, Lucy; Lancashire, Anne; Astington, John H.; and Straznicki, Marta. ‘Popular Theatre and the Red Bull’. *Early Theatre* 9.2 (2006): 99-156 (paper). Article 7, 105 – 109 <http://digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca/earlytheatre/vol9/iss2/7> [accessed 15 October 2010].

<sup>241</sup> Thomas Jordan, *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon, with The Humours of Woodstreet-Compter*, (London, 1657), Title page. Further references to this edition will follow quotations in the text.

*Beggar's Opera* (1728) and its sequel *Polly* (1729).<sup>242</sup> He is also significant in appealing to a wide range of audience; his play *Fancy's Festivals* (1657) was noted as being 'privately performed by many civil persons of quality'.<sup>243</sup> During the last days of the Commonwealth Jordan, like Davenant, was quietly reviving the theatre before Charles II officially endorsed its return.<sup>244</sup> Tatham and Jordan, both city authors, were innovative in shaping Restoration comedy; Tatham's inheritance being immediately received by Behn, while Jordan's influence reached as far as the early eighteenth century.

### ***The Rump***

In Chapter One I showed how the aristocratic author Sir Robert Howard presented the Royalists' story of the war in *The Committee*. Although a Royalist, John Tatham was better known as a city author, depicting London with sharp satiric humour but also a certain compassion. His comedy *The Rump: or, the Mirrour of the late Times* was privately staged in 1659, before Charles II returned to the throne, and then reperformed by Davenant's company in 1660. It was a popular anti-Cromwellian satire, looking back to the older Jacobean city comedies, and

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<sup>242</sup> *The Beggar's Opera* was hugely successful when performed in 1728; *Polly*, however, was censored and, although published in 1729, was not performed in Gay's lifetime. Its world premiere did not occur until 17 June, 1977, at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in London.

<sup>243</sup> Thomas Jordan, *Fancy's Festivals: A Masque* (1657), title page.

<sup>244</sup> There was another close connection with Davenant. Like Tatham, Jordan likened Charles II to the Sun in a typical eulogy to the King on his return. In his 'Prologue to the King' in the 1663 reprint of *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon*, Jordan tells Charles II:

For like that glittering Birth of Beams, you do  
Transluminat the Western World, from you  
Our Saint, our Soul, our Sovereign, our King,  
We live and grow, as the Sun breeds the Spring.      [3 – 6]

taking topicality to its slanderous and libellous limits. Through his specific attacks on contemporary living figures, rendered slanderous by being performed on the public stage, and libellous by its subsequent frequent publications, Tatham's searing journalistic satire is derivative of contemporary newsbooks and pamphlets. As Derek Hughes has noted, 'Tatham's play... satirizes the main contenders for power in the aftermath of Cromwell's death... primarily portraying them as upstarts who have risen far beyond their station, and showing their final demotion to street-vendors.' (Hughes, p. 139).<sup>245</sup> More savagely satirical than pre-war comedies, Tatham's writing style was short-lived but crucially important in the history of seventeenth-century English comedy. Tatham eschewed Davenant's 'Star-tearing Strains' in favour of more hard-bitten, brutal comic writing:

Expect not here Language Three stories high;  
Star-tearing Strains fit not a Comedy.  
Here's no Elaborate Scenes, for he confesses  
He took small paines in't, Truth doth need no Dresses.<sup>246</sup>

Emulating the Puritan persona of a plain speaker – 'Truth doth need no Dresses' – Tatham depicts actual people either recently dead, or still living, in a sharp topical satire: the two army leaders John Lambert and Charles Fleetwood;

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<sup>245</sup> David Bywaters sees this 'personal ridicule' as the playwright's device in order 'to depict the Restoration triumphantly [...] without offending the enduring principles and prejudices that had made the monarchy's expulsion such a popular cause in the City not so many years before.' Bywaters, 'Representations of the Interregnum and Restoration in English Drama of the early 1660s', p.260.

<sup>246</sup> John Tatham, *The Rump: or The Mirrour of The late Times. A New Comedy*, (London 1660), *Prologue*, 1 – 6. Further references to this edition will follow quotations in the text. I have, however, retained the spelling of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of 1661, where the names of characters such as Lambert are given their correct form, rather than in the 1660 version, where they were shown as, for example, "Bertlam". It has been assumed that this was a deliberate decision on the part of Tatham, in order to avoid prosecution for libel.

their wives, Frances Lambert (rumoured to be Cromwell's mistress) and Bridget Fleetwood (Cromwell's daughter); Elizabeth Cromwell herself, and Colonel John Hewson. Artificiality gives way to a kind of reality, giving *The Rump* a particular authenticity new to English comedy. As a city author, Tatham's plays reflect his ingrained loyalty and love of London. The final act of *The Rump* concentrates upon the apprentices' uprising within the City, used by Tatham to symbolise the chaos and rebellion within the collapsing Protectorate.<sup>247</sup> Tatham's description of the rape of London implicitly links the city with the Serene Republic of Venice, known as 'La Serenissima' and personified in literature as a *mother* city. This link not only endorses the idea of London as a mini-republic, but makes the image of the gang rape by the victorious soldiers quashing the uprising all the more brutal:

*I<sup>st</sup> Prentice*: [...] Was ever such a Rape committed upon a poor She City before? Lay her legs open to the wide world, for every Rogue to peep in her Breech. (5.1.p 58)<sup>248</sup>

The double meaning of 'peep' as both exposing London to the male gaze, and the rapists' 'eyes'(penises) is a development of the female personification of land and estates in the pre-Civil War plays (as I showed in my earlier discussion of Middleton's *Michaelmas Term*). Tatham's feminisation of London is used to

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<sup>247</sup> Aparna Dharwadker comments that 'The Puritan Interregnum was the largest drama of its kind to be enacted in the metaphoric theatre of the nation, but it was played out without the possibility of legitimate theatrical re-presentation.' 'The Comedy of Dispossession', p.434.

<sup>248</sup> Tatham also personifies the text of *The Rump* as female. In his dedication to Walter James, he reminds his friend that he saw the play in its early stages: 'You had the sight of the Brat in its swaddling Clouts (my loose Papers, e're it was fully shap'd for the Stage)[...] from thence I deriv'd an Encouragement to cherish the Youngling, till it was fit for Service, and then turn'd her off to shift for her self.' Tatham's affection for his play is sustained throughout this playful dedication – 'those to whom she had Relation wish they had her again, and would make more of her... beginning now upon a second Adventure, and somewhat amended in her Apparel.' *Dedication*, sig. A2r-v.



indicate the enhanced power of the commercially developing city over the neglected country estates in the 1650s. He captures the sense of London as unique, as the object of citizens' affection and loyalty, in much the same way as Italians viewed 'La Serenissima'.<sup>249</sup>

Tatham's claim to a new form of dramatic writing emphasises the move from aristocratic to non-aristocratic characters. The social hierarchy of this comedy is headed by the families of Cromwell and his generals Lambert and Fleetwood; the 'titles assumed by 'Lady' Lambert and 'Lady' Fleetwood are swiftly shown either to be fake, or to be symbolic of the characters' overreaching – as when Lady Lambert attempts to lead her uncomprehending maid, Priscilla, to understand the implications of her becoming Lady Protectoress:

*Lady Lambert:* I profess thou are dull, abominable dull, dost thou not know upon what Score my dear, and second self is gon to *Wallingford House*?

*Priscilla:* How should I *Madam*, I cannot Divine?

*Lady Lambert:* Lord help thy head, why, he is gon to be made a Man Wench. (2.1.p.15)

The parliamentarians gave the captured Charles I the title of "Man" (Henrietta Maria was known as "the Woman"), perhaps not only to signal contempt for the defeated monarch, but also to lessen the horror of the regicide. Killing a man, a convicted traitor to the country, has less psychological impact on

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<sup>249</sup> The growing power of London is discussed by Tim Harris in *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II: Propaganda and Politics from the Restoration until the Exclusion Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Laurence Manley develops this argument in *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). A more specific identification of London's mini-republican status is described by Darryll Grantley in *London in Early Modern English Drama: Representing the Built Environment* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

the subjects than killing their king.<sup>250</sup> Tatham plays on the *double entendre* surrounding Lambert's sexual experience as a "Man" – Priscilla thinks he is going to Wallingford House to lose his virginity:

*Priscilla:* Was he not so before, if not, your Ladyship hath had but an ill time on't.

*Lady Lambert:* The Prince of Men, you Bagage; thou art such a dull one.

*Priscilla:* I cannot help it, *Madam*, while I remain in Ignorance.

*Lady Lambert:* I see I must open thy Eyes by way of Explanation; Then know that from henceforth I will be called *her Highness*. (2.1.p.15)

The less forgiving members of Charles II's government persuaded him to wreak symbolic revenge upon his father's murderers by disinterring and mutilating their corpses. The Restoration theatre also takes symbolic revenge on Cromwell, Lambert and Fleetwood by ridiculing them in public.<sup>251</sup> Tatham not only demonises his caricatures of real historical figures, but uses the Greek tragic principle of keeping the most terrible things offstage; in this case the greatest of his monsters, Cromwell himself.<sup>252</sup> It was vital that the Cromwells were discredited in order for the Stuarts to regain public support, and Tatham was one of the most instrumental authors in doing so.

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<sup>250</sup> Two hundred years later, this technique appears to have been repeated by the French revolutionaries, who referred to the deposed Louis XVI and his queen Marie Antoinette as "citizens", reducing their status to that of their subjects. An act of humiliation, it also enabled the trial, conviction and execution of the monarch and his wife to be depicted as a lawful act of the state.

<sup>251</sup> The bodies of Cromwell, Ireton and Bradshaw, who had signed Charles I's death warrant, were dug up and dragged through the London streets to Tyburn, where they were beheaded. The skulls were placed on Westminster Bridge where they remained for much of Charles II's reign. In a high wind, Cromwell's head blew off, was found by a soldier, and was passed down through the centuries until it was eventually presented to the Protector's old Cambridge College, Sidney Sussex. The head is buried in the college grounds near the chapel, but its exact whereabouts remains secret.

<sup>252</sup> The Cromwell-sized hole we see in *The Rump* was exploited by Aphra Behn in *The Roundheads*, where the absent Cromwell is sexually defeated by the hero.

Tatham's satire is one step removed from the Protector by concentrating on his family. Cromwell's widow haunts *The Rump* rather as Margaret of Anjou haunts Edward IV's court in Shakespeare's *Richard III*; however she is comically undermined by Tatham, unlike her portrait as a virago in John Crouch's pamphlet *New-Market-Fayre* (1650). The real Elizabeth Cromwell was the daughter of Sir James Bouchier, a knighted fur-dealer and leather dresser, and one of the Parliamentary power-brokers against Charles I; but her mother was the daughter of a publican, and her lower-class origins are mercilessly satirised.<sup>253</sup> Each time Mrs Cromwell enters, it is to lament the passing of her husband, and to nag and to compare unfavourably his successors with 'He that out-did all Histories of Kings or *Keasors* [Caesars]' (5.1.p.56). She disingenuously reveals to the audience contemporary accusations that, under Cromwell, titles were meaningless, and honours easy to come by:

*Mrs Cromwell*: [He that] was his own Herald, and could give Titles of Honor to the meanest Peasants; made Brewers, Draymen, Coblers, Tinkers or any bodie Lords; such was his power, no Prince ever did the like: amongst the rest, that precious piece thy Husband was one of his making.  
*Lady Lambert*: Would we had never known those painted Titles that are so easily wash'd off. (5.1.p.56)

Mrs Cromwell insults Lambert by declaring that not only were the titles valueless, but that he could only acquire one which was handed out to all the other tradesmen and lower classes. Lady Lambert retaliates by retorting that whatever Cromwell created was worthless and as easily washed off as paint. Tatham's portrait of Mrs Cromwell recalls the stereotypically garrulous, whining old woman of the pre-war comedies, later played by the Restoration male comedians

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<sup>253</sup> Katharine Gillespie, 'Elizabeth Cromwell's Kitchen Court: Republicanism and the Consort', *Genders Journal Online* 33 (2001), 1 – 34. [accessed 20 July 2011].

as a drag role.<sup>254</sup> Mrs Cromwell is a throwback to the past, but Lady Lambert, wife of the Parliament general, is another of the first Restoration viragos, played by a female actor.<sup>255</sup> Tatham unites pre- and post-war theatre in this ‘new’ comedy.

Tatham reminds his audience of the pre-Civil War theme suggested by dramatists such as Middleton and Brome and developed by Restoration dramatists: the association of the royalist cavalier “standing to his Tackling” with sexual potency and prowess, and later with amoral libertinism.<sup>256</sup> Sexual frustration underlies the new all-female committee established by Lady Lambert and her friends as a mirror of the men’s committee of Safety. Lady Lambert’s committee seeks to redress grievances and to overturn the strict prohibitions of the Cromwellian regime. Their “commonwealth”, they claim, will be the product of a truly republican, Utopian ‘free’ society, but the petitions considered by the committee concentrate on a desire for greater sexual freedom between men and women, particularly between the fascinating cavaliers and the frustrated parliamentarian ladies:

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<sup>254</sup>The male comedians such as James Nokes, Anthony Leigh and William Bullock, continued to play ‘skirts roles’ throughout the later seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Thomas Shadwell features a drag role for Nokes and/or Leigh in most of his comedies, and Wycherley’s “Mrs Midnight” in *The Plain Dealer* is another example. See my articles, ‘Wycherley’s *The Plain Dealer* and Shadwell’s *A True Widow*’ in *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theatre Research* 4.1 (1989), 49-51; and ‘A Desperate Ill, Must Have a Desperate Cure’: Cross-Dressing in the Plays of Thomas Shadwell’, *Restoration* 20 (1996), 165-174.

<sup>255</sup> Some scholars see Tatham’s main target as being women. Derek Hughes defines Tatham’s satire as consisting of “crude and commonplace analogies between insubordinate subjects and insubordinate women.” (Hughes, *Theatre of Aphra Behn*, 140.)

<sup>256</sup> The potent cavalier becomes the cynical libertine in Restoration plays, most obviously in Shadwell’s adaptation of the Don Juan figure in *The Libertine* (1675) and in Etherege’s more subtle creation, Dorimant, in *The Man of Mode* (1676).

*1<sup>st</sup> Lady:* As you are a Lover of Women, let the Act of the 24 of June Against *Fornication* be repeal'd; me thinks it frights, as there were a Furnace in't.

*Lady L:* As there were Conveniencies in that Act, which ty'd up Mens tongues from babbling, so there were destructive Inconveniencies in't; familiarity not so frequently used between Man and Woman. When know, Society is the life of Republicks; [...] Indeed, things were rather done in fear then freedome.

*1<sup>st</sup> Lady:* In a Free State, who is not Free?

*2<sup>nd</sup> Lady:* I beseech you in the next place, that the Cavaliers may not be lookt upon as Monsters, for they are Men.

*1<sup>st</sup> Lady:* And that it be imputed no Crime to keep'em company, for they are honest.

*3<sup>rd</sup> Lady:* And men that will stand to their Tackling.

*Lady L:* Well, we'l have those amended [...] (2.1.p.27)

Conversely, the Puritans and parliamentarians were depicted as impotent both sexually and politically, and therefore tormented by their obsession with sexual matters.<sup>257</sup> Women of both parties were figured as sexually voracious, however, and Tatham's exposure of the female republic, founded on 'society' and sexual freedom, again links this Restoration comedy with the traditional sixteenth- and seventeenth-century image of woman as rebel and dangerous underminer of social propriety.<sup>258</sup> His 'Mirroure of the Late Times' both reflects back and looks

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<sup>257</sup> In her definition of Restoration libertinism, Susan Staves has argued that "in the Restoration context, libertinism offered a critique of Puritanism. Indeed, royalist libertinism often asserted that chastity was impossible and that Puritanism was no more than hypocrisy." See "Behn, women and society" in *The Cambridge Companion to Aphra Behn*, ed Derek Hughes and Janet Todd, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p 12 – 28 (p. 21).

<sup>258</sup> Women in particular were portrayed as witches in Reginald Scott's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), and in drama the female transgressors of the patriarchal society included Dekker and Middleton's Moll Cut-purse in *The Roaring Girl* (1610). More seriously, Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* (performed c. 1611, published 1623), Webster's heroines Vittoria Corombona in *The White Devil* (1612), Antonia in *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614), and Annabella in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1633); also Mother Sawyer in *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621) by Dekker, Ford and Rowley.

forward, offering a prophetic portrait of the sexually lax and carefree society which Charles II's Restoration was apparently encouraging.

Tatham's new writing is a sharper, more topical version of city comedy which concentrates upon the political themes associated with the overthrow of the Rump Parliament as well as the (invented) domestic events behind the scenes. Lambert and Fleetwood are brought down by the revolt of the city apprentices at the end of the play, and Tatham uses the common soldiers as his narrators and dramatic touchstones. A corporal informs two soldiers that 'The Citty's up in Armes... to morrow the Prentices intend to petition the Lord Maior for a free Parliament.' (3.1.p.37, 38) The soldiers delight in this news and the potential of unrest, confident that in a battle between the city and the army, the army will win. They are already sharing out the spoils of the city, in this case the shops and their wares, a new source of wealth and mercantile property offset against the old landed estates:

*1<sup>st</sup> Souldier:* And is't come to that, then hey for *Lumbard-street*, there's a Shop that I have markt out for mine already.

*2<sup>nd</sup> Souldier:* You must not think to have it all your self, Brother.

*1<sup>st</sup> Souldier:* He that Wins gold, let him Wear gold, I cry.

*Corporal:* Well, we shall have enough, 'tis a rich City, never came better news to the Souldiery. (3.1.p.38)

Act 4 of *The Rump* depicts in detail the street battles between the apprentices and the soldiers; the soldiers, led by Lambert, eventually flee the city, leaving the apprentices victorious. The apprentices symbolically burn the Rump Parliament at the end of the play in a series of city bonfires, and some members of the committee are found in the streets plying their wares as ballad-sellers, orangewomen, and cobblers. Mrs Cromwell, begging old pots and pans to sell from the contemptuous servants, remarks to her old confederate Lord

Desborough: 'It somewhat palliates my miserie, That in afflictions you like  
Sharers be.' (5.1.p.67)

Tatham's epilogue flatters the Restoration audience, absolving them of any possible sympathy or involvement with the events and characters depicted in his play:

You have here in a MIRROR seen the Crimes  
Of the late Pageantry Changeling Times.  
Let me Survey your Brows – They are Serene,  
Not clouded, or disturb'd with what y've seen:  
None whose grand Guilt appears toucht to the quick,  
And in Revenge wou'd gainst their MIRROR kick; (3 – 8)

However, as Michael Cordner asks, 'How straight-faced is the Epilogue?', pointing out that 'audiences for *The Rump* – before and after Charles II's return – must have contained many whose 1640s and 1650s histories would not sustain close inspection in the new dawn of 1660.'<sup>259</sup> With his reassurance – 'there's no Phanaticks here' – and his conclusion '[You are] Innocent as Buds that sprout in May' (*Epilogue*, 2 – 4) Tatham turns from addressing the audience to a direct address to the King. His offer of loyalty is in return for the sovereign's sun-like restorative work:

'Tis you must gild our Hemisphere, and give  
A life to us who willingly would live.  
Then, If you please to grant us our Request,  
Signe us your Servants, and we'l do our best. (15 – 18)

Tatham shows his loyalty to London above monarchy and republic as he cuts a deal with the returning monarch – and in this he takes an unusual position compared to the eager sycophants such as Davenant and Cowley. In his depiction

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<sup>259</sup> Michael Cordner, 'Sleeping with the Enemy: Aphra Behn's *The Roundheads* and the Political Comedy of Adultery', in *Players, Playwrights, Playhouses: Investigating Performance, 1660-1800*, eds Michael Cordner and Peter Holland (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) p 55. Further references to this source will be given in the form of the author's name and page number.

of the events which unfolded after Cromwell's death and the collapse of the republic, Tatham creates a new form of comedy and a new version of journalistic satire whose short life was confined to the 1660s.

### ***The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon***

*The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon* was possibly the most successful of Thomas Jordan's works; it was performed before and after the Civil War, and was a significant influence upon later seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century dramatists.<sup>260</sup> Jordan replaced the neo-platonic courtly love tragicomedies enjoyed by Charles I and Henrietta Maria, with a worldly, more realistic, view of sex and the city in seventeenth-century London. The popularity of his play at the time of its first performance gives credence to scholars' sense that the Court was seen as out of touch with the rest of London, and, by inference, with the rest of the country.<sup>261</sup> The publication date of *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon* in 1657, a year before the death of Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector and virtual monarch, is significant as this positions the play, along with John Tatham's *The Rump* (1658) as part of an increasingly overt movement, under Davenant's *aegis*, towards the renewal and rehabilitation of the theatre..<sup>262</sup> Jordan's "cross-over" comedy was revived on stage and republished in 1663. *The Walks of Islington and*

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<sup>260</sup> Pages 173-177 of this next section will be published in the March 2013 edition of *Notes and Queries*, under the title : 'A Lost Play Found: Thomas Jordan's *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon*'

<sup>261</sup> See Chapter 3, p. 76, Note 128 above.

<sup>262</sup> The obsessive theatre-lover Davenant was beginning to reintroduce private – but overt – theatrical entertainments to the Protectorate, in the guise of impressing important foreign visitors, and on the understanding that he was seeking to reform the theatre. *A Single Night's Entertainment at Rutland House*, a series of vignettes, performed in 1657, was followed by the spectacular entertainments *Sir Francis Drake* (1657) and *The Conquest of the Spaniards in Peru* (1658).



*Hogsdon* held more obvious appeal for the realistic and worldly Charles II than it had done for his parents; it may also have influenced Jordan's successors, William Wycherley and Thomas Shadwell, and John Gay in their depiction of the London underworld in *Alsatia* and *Newgate*. Jordan, rather than Gay, was the first to present a set of songs against the apparently unlikely backdrop of the Newgate debtors' prison ('compter'), and so signposted the 'Newgate' opera which 'made Gay rich and Rich gay'.<sup>263</sup>

Licensed for performance by Sir Henry Herbert on 2 August 1641, Jordan's comedy was one of the last to be performed on the public stage before the 1642 closure of the theatres. N.W. Bawcutt's edition of Herbert's records is slightly misleading, implying that Jordan submitted two comedies for consideration at this time, but I am convinced that these are one and the same play. In a general note for August 1641, Herbert writes '*Youths Figaries* all[owe]d upon several reformatiōns and not otherwise.' (Bawcutt, p. 209). This is annotated by Bawcutt with the comment, 'not mentioned by Bentley. A lost play.' (p. 209). A few notes later, Herbert's entry for 2 August 1641 reads: 'This Comedy, called, *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon, With the Humours of Woodstreet-Compter*, may be Acted, This 2, August, 1641.' (Bawcutt, p. 210). Herbert's reference to 'This Comedy' is made as though he is referring back to something he had already vetted, and it would seem likely that, if this were a resubmitted play, with the required 'several reformatiōns' now made, he would wave it through as he does in the entry for 2 August 1641. However, there is clearer evidence that *Youths Figaries* and *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon* are the same play. A 'figarie'

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<sup>263</sup> *The Beggar's Opera* may have brought in around £4,000, inspiring this contemporary, but anonymous, witticism.

was a slang phrase for – amongst other things – a trick. John Tatham’s comedy *The Scots Figaries* depicted two comic Scotsmen (the Scottish accent mercilessly satirised) trying to gull the English in London, and ending up being fooled themselves. The satirist John Crouch subtitled his satirical pamphlet *The Second Part of the Tragi-Comedy, called New-Market-Fayre* (1649), ‘*Parliament’s New Figaryes*’. In the last two lines of *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon*. Stephen Flylove, one of the two rake-heroes, ends the play with a dinner invitation:

*Flylove*: Come in my mad merry Mates and fellow-Travellers, let’s in and chat the story of our Travels, the tricks of our Disguises, with the quaint and jovial Humours which we have found i’t<sup>h</sup> Compter.

To marry and be civil our next care is,  
We now have done enough for Youths Figaries. (5.1.sig.H4r)

Finally, Jordan reinstated the (translated) title of *Youths Figaries* in the 1663 version ‘Printed by Authority for the use of the Author.’ The title page of the reprinted version reads in full, *Tricks of Youth, or The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon, with the Humours of Woodstreet-Compter*.<sup>264</sup>

Jordan felt his comedy was well received. To his original dedicatee Richard Cheyney (the 1663 reprinted version was dedicated to William Wimberley), he commented, “this Comedy gained the success of a good Censure, and received more Acceptation than I thought it merited” (*Dedication*, sig.A2r) . ‘R.C.’ returned Jordan’s compliment of the dedication by providing a poetic eulogy, in which he referred to clearing ‘A debt that’s due almost this twenty

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<sup>264</sup> Thomas Jordan, *Tricks of Youth, or, The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon, with The Humours of Woodstreet-Compter*, (London, 1663), title page. This edition is newly set by the anonymous printer, and some of the spelling differs, for example “publickly” for “publikely”, and “nineteen” for “19”. The legend “Never Printed before” which is on both versions stands true, for these are clearly two different settings of the same play.

year'. (sig.A3r). Given that the play was first printed in 1657, Cheyney's debt was 'incurred' probably at around the time of the play's licensing in 1641, sixteen years ago. He also referred to Jordan's '*large improvements*' over this sixteen year period, but as yet I have not been able to track down any manuscript or printed version before 1657, and so the changes which Jordan made may never be known. A nineteen days' run in 1641 would have been particularly impressive, as Cheyney noted:

Had I but room, I could declare how clean  
Your Fancy wrought, which did adorn your Scene  
[...]  
Show how the Muses in their sportfull rage,  
Set all the Town a Walking to your Stage,  
With so much Wit, and Art, and Judgement lay'd,  
That nineteen days together they were play'd. (sig.A3r)

and with admiration concludes the poem:

Now by the bounty of the Press we be  
Posses'd of that which we before did see,  
Not pleasing onely nineteen times read o're,  
But nineteen Ages, or till Time's no more. (*Ibid*)

The fact that Jordan's comedy was so popular that it received a nineteen day in the second half of 1641 gives the lie to some scholars' assumptions (perhaps fuelled by Brome's famous comment about the 'epidemical ruin of the scene', which I quoted in the opening paragraph of this thesis) that London performers and playgoers anticipated the closure of the theatres. It also casts doubt on the reason for the possible non-staging of Killigrew's *Parson's Wedding* at this time.<sup>265</sup> If actors were prepared to stage Jordan's comedy – and make it a huge success – then if they were reluctant to stage Killigrew's comedy, this may

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<sup>265</sup> See Chapter Four, p. 77, Note 131 above.

have been due to a doubt that his play would be as successful in performance. Perhaps this is why, as I have suggested, when *The Parson's Wedding* was eventually staged in 1664, Killigrew employed an all-female cast in a – gimmicky but successful – bid to ensure a successful run.

As an example of seventeenth-century comic writing *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon* appears to be deceptively familiar; Jordan emulates Brome in using place-realism to engage his audience's interest, setting the first scene in the 'Saracen's Head' public-house in Islington. Anticipating Wycherley's version in *The Country Wife* (1676), the gallants Jack Wildfire, Frank Rivers and Stephen Flylove conspire to free Frank's flirtatious sister Mrs Trimwell from her pursuing husband the 'old jealous Citizen' surgeon Trimwell. They are aided by their creature whose name illustrates his function, Alexander Pimpwell, and their flirtatious sexual behaviour prefigures that of the gallants with Margery Pinchwife:

*Mrs Trimwell:* But hark you, *Frank*, what Gentlemen are these?  
*Rivers:* Friends of mine, most dear and intimate, salute them.  
*Mrs Trimwell:* Oh, y'are a pretty Gentleman to send for me into company.  
*Wildfire:* Lady, your humble servant.      *He kisseth.*  
*Flylove:* Turn to me hony and give me a kiss.  
*Mrs Trimwell:* Turn to you Sir, which part? My face is towards you already.  
*Flylove:* By the Cherry-lip of *Venus*, you are wondrous witty, Lady.  
*Mrs Trimwell:* I am glad Sir you so apprehend it. (1.1. sig.A4v)

This witty wordplay on the part of Wildfire and Flylove is characteristic of the dialogue in Restoration sex comedies, and of William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675) in particular; in Wycherley's comedy, similarly flirtatious sexual behaviour is taken so much for granted that the rake Horner convinces

polite society of his aversion to women through his refusal to greet them in the (now) conventional manner:

*Sir Jasper Fidget:* [...] Pray salute my wife, my lady, sir.

*Horner:* I will kiss no man's wife, sir, for him, sir; I have taken my eternal leave, sir, of the sex already, sir.<sup>266</sup>

Horner's refusal causes much merriment to Sir Jasper, but also convinces him of his friend's genuine affliction; an affliction which enables Horner to cuckold his friends and associates with impunity. But Jordan's text is more salacious than Wycherley's; whereas the kissing in *The Country Wife* is flirtatious and indicative of sexual desire, Jordan's "turn to me" is far more explicitly picturing the act of intercourse, and Mrs Trimwell is praised for her witty equation of face-mouth and arse-mouth. Jordan's sexual innuendo may seem slightly surprising when included as part of a text published at a time when emphasis was being placed upon the necessary reformation of the English stage.

Jordan's characters of the elderly jealous Trimwell and his attractive younger wife reappear as in Wycherley's *The Country Wife* as the older husband Pinchwife, jealously guarding his young wife Margery from the attentions of younger gentlemen. Trimwell's jealousy causes him to hate his wife; he swears revenge on her and her suspected lover Rivers, and in Act 2, set in the King's Head at Hogsdowne, disguises himself as 'an old, blind Fidler, [...] led in by a boy', attempting to keep watch on his wife and her dancing partners:

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<sup>266</sup> William Wycherley, *The Country Wife* (1675), in *The Country Wife and other Plays* ed. by Peter Dixon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, repr. 1998, 2008), 1.1.60-61.

*Trimwell: .....in this Dance*  
 There is compos'd all that her wanton heart  
 Can give, or he can cover, I must now  
 Turn all my love to loathing; Sweet revenge  
 I am thy faithful Votary, I will still  
 Pursue their foot-steps, and with wary eyes,  
 Watch their Adulterous Conspiracies. (2.1. sig.D3r)

In his depiction of this December-May marriage in *The Country Wife*, Wycherley specifically appears to borrow an idea from Jordan in the famous 'letter' scene in 4.2. In Jordan's version, Splendora Nice writes a letter of assignation to her suitor Mercurio, while in the same room her father seeks to dissuade him from courting her:

*Splendora: My deare Mercurio* *She writes*  
*Nice: And let me tell you Sir, my Child and wealth*  
 Shall not be both expos'd to your profuseness  
 Therefore (by my admonishment) pray leave her.  
*Splendora: Meete me tomorrow.* *Writes agen.*  
*Mercurio: Sir did you ever love?*  
*Nice: Yes.*  
*Mercurio: But did you e're affect a Virgin truly?*  
*Nice: As man can do.*  
*Mercurio: When.*  
*Splendora: Tomorrow in the afternoon.* *Writes agen.*  
*Nice: When time and love had made me capable*  
 Of woman and her vertues.  
*Splendora: In the long green walk by Newington.* *Writes.*  
 (1.2, sig.B3v-B4r)

Similarly Pinchwife believes that his wife is writing down what he dictates to her, ie a letter to her lover renouncing him forever; in fact Mrs Pinchwife is really writing a love letter to the notorious womaniser Horner, who has beguiled her, and who will become her lover in reality:

*Pinchwife: 'Though I suffered last night your nauseous, loathed kisses and embraces' – write.*  
*Mrs. Pinchwife: Nay, why should I say so? You know I told you he had a sweet breath.*

*Pinchwife:* Write.

*Mrs Pinchwife:* Let me but put out 'loathed.'

*Pinchwife:* Write, I say.

*Mrs. Pinchwife:* Well then.--- [Writes.]

*Pinchwife:* Let's see, what have you writ? – [Takes the paper and reads.]

'Though I suffered last night your kisses and embraces' – Thou impudent creature, where is 'nauseous' and 'loathed'?

*Mrs. Pinchwife:* I can't abide to write such filthy words. (4.2.97-108)

Nice's name defines him in early seventeenth century terms as gullible and foolish, and his instinctive preference of the affected French knight Sir Reverence Lamard over the devoted Mercurio seems to indicate that he is easily taken in by appearances. (In fact Jordan shows that Nice's preference for this apparently unsuitable suitor is due to unconsciously paternal feelings; at the end of the comedy 'Sir Reverence' reveals himself to be Nice's long-lost son.) Sir Reverence, despised by Splendora as:

The onely man of fashion (from whose Country  
All things are acceptable, no disease excepted) (1.2.sig.C2r)

goes out of his way to demonstrate that he lacks the wit and breeding of a gallant like Mercurio; Jordan develops a bawdy joke at Splendora's expense between her father and her reluctant suitor:

*Mr Nice:* We call her Splendora.

*Sir Reverence:* Spent whora?

*Mr Nice:* Splen dora.

*Sir Reverence:* Split whore a.

*Mr Nice:* The name is some what hard Sir.

*Sir Reverence:* Begar so it is, Split, Split, Split whore a.

*Mr Nice:* Splen.

*Sir Reverence:* Splen.

*Mr Nice:* Do.

*Sir Reverence:* Do.

*Mr Nice:* ra.

*Sir Reverence:* ra.

*Mr Nice:* Splen do ra.

*Sir Reverence:* Splen do ra.

*Mr Nice:* Right Sir. (1.2.sig.C2r-v)

Jordan's effect is achieved by playing upon Sir Reverence's apparent failure to grasp the English name 'Splendora', and his suggestion of possible alternatives, each sexually charged, as befits the stereotypical French gallant in English comedy. The jokes against Splendora would perhaps offend a modern audience; not only is she called a 'whore', but a 'spent' whore, into whom a customer has emptied or 'spent' himself. Worse than that, the substitution of 'split' for 'spent' introduces the violent imagery of the woman literally being torn open by the man's sexual excitement, and Mr Nice attempts to control Sir Reverence's own excitement with a reproof which contains an inadvertent pun, "The name is some what hard Sir." The mention of "hard" appears to incite Sir Reverence further, and he reaches a verbal climax with his next line, "Split, Split, Split whore a." But this *risque* moment is brought back under control by Nice's immediate rebuke that his daughter's name is "Splendora" and so the exchange moves on.

Nice is bewitched by Sir Reverence's apparent wealth, and it is only when he is thrown into the debtors' prison (the Compter) that the father realises his favoured suitor (son) is in fact penniless.

Both Nice and Flylove are punished for their poor judgement, Nice by being exposed as a fool, Flylove by falling in love with a woman who is far above him, the heiress Belladora. Flylove's flirtatious attempt to teach her the Lover's Alphabet, with accompanying gestures, is probably another reason for the play's huge popularity:

*Flylove:* ...nay I'll shew you more tricks by and by, it is so very fair that I must kiss it, there's a letter gone that stands for C. I confess C may stand for another business and fitter for the letter, but a kiss shall serve at this time.



*Belladora*: On I pray Sir.

*Flylove*: Nay I shall come on fast enough, I warrant you. (3.2, sig. E1r)

Like Killigrew, Jordan exploits the sexual undercurrents of the dialogue:

*Flylove*: Remember R stands for repent, but I am far enough off from that. N. is the next letter, N stands for ne're be good, you shall learn O, Q, P, V in private, that is the full trick or conclusion of the Lovers Alphabet.

(3.2.sig. E1r-v)

In the 1657 original, 'trick' is replaced by 'prick': the conclusion of the Lovers' Alphabet is OQPV, which stands for 'occupy you', the intended climax of Flylove's encounter with Belladora.<sup>267</sup>

The second half of the comedy plays with the idea of a prison as a setting for a musical comedy, as John Gay was to develop in his popular *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), and Jordan's description of the Compter is the first such specific depiction on the public stage, Act 4 and part of Act 5 of *The Walks of Islington* is set in the prison, where the male characters find themselves after various plot twists. Trimwell triumphantly declares at the end of Act 3:

*Trimwell*: My singing Gallants your mad misdemeanour  
Shall bring you now to sing the Compter tenor. (3.3. sig.E4v)

The Compter is itself the subject of a song and dance (during which the disguised Trimwell watches with fury his wife flirting with the gallant Frank Rivers), On his arrival, Wildfire is greeted by a medley of assorted prisoners who have taken over and effectively run the prison; Rent-Free, the prison steward, whose services entitle him to live rent-free as his name suggests; 'Chamberlain Jaylbird', and the

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<sup>267</sup> Williams, *Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery*, p. 829. In the *Dictionary*, 'O' stands for 'vagina'.

head of the prison fraternity, Lord Loose-proof, who takes a kindly interest in the new inmate:

*Rent-Free*: What is your name my friend?

*Lord Lows-proof*: You must tell the Steward your name, you will be the sooner entred a member of the Sheriffs-Basket, there is (my friend) a strange miracle in our living, we never want meat yet keep continual fast; and yet all that fast, you may see by our Clothes we are loose enough; we live in Imitation of the Owls, we sleep ith' day time, and revel all the night: Some beds we have for Gentleman of quality, as my self being the Lord, *Steward Rentfree, Constable Lazy, and Chamberlain Jaylbird*.

*Wildfire*: Gentlemen, I was a Page to a Knight that was a prisoner in this house *Sir Reverence Lamard*, my name is *Wildfire*.

*Lows-proof*: Prethee stand farther off, thou wilt melt me else.

*Jaylbird*: My Lord begins to hiss.

*Lows-proof*: Gentlemen of the Kings-Ward, let us consult upon this business, 'tis for the good of the Hole, and of the whole House; let us for once be wiser and honester than e'r we have been, there may come much mischief by this *Wildfire*, if he stay long he will consume us, and every creeping thing about us, our beds being all straw is very combustible; the very blowing on's nose blows a bed up. (4.1.sig.F2r-v)

Jordan's emphasis throughout is on the comic aspects of the jailhouse:

Wildfire is soon joined by his friend Flylove and by the fiddlers who 'were with us at *Hogsdon*', and after payment has been agreed with Rent-Free, they sing and dance, knowing that they have all secured their release in the morning.

Jordan's sketches of the inmates of the Compter may well have influenced Thomas Shadwell's depiction of the cheats and debtors in his popular comedy *The Squire of Alsatia* (1688).<sup>268</sup> His pragmatic view of the prison lifestyle is echoed by Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, where the corrupt attorney Peachum declares:

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<sup>268</sup> In Shadwell's play, Alsatia is another word for Whitechapel, a disreputable area of London, whose inhabitants include the young heir Shamwell, who 'being ruined by *Cheatly*, is made a Decoy-Duck for others; not daring to stir out of *Alsatia*.....[he] is bound with *Cheatly* for heirs, and lives upon them; a dissolute, debauched life'. Likewise Captain Hackum, 'a Block-headed Bully of *Alsatia*; a cowardly, blustering, impudent fellow [.....] retreating into *White-fryers* for a very small debt; where, by the *Alsatians* he is dubb'd a Captain; marries one that lets

*Peachum*: A lawyer is an honest employment, so is mine. Like me too, he acts in a double capacity, both against rogues and for'em; for 'tis but fitting that we should protect and encourage cheats, since we live by them.<sup>269</sup>

Once in the Compter with his friends, Flylove cheers their spirits with a song:

*Flylove*: Come Ile begin a mad Health, and let every man have his fancie.  
Here's a curse to all those  
That are Pris'ners foes,  
And the Coward that goes  
To undoe men for blows,  
Who doth basely expose  
Their bodies to throwes,  
In a Prison where growes  
Infection to th' nose.... (4.1.sig.F1 r)

Jordan's comedy is full of dancing and of physical humour; in the fourth act Sir Reverence is unable to contain himself (literally), with the unfortunate Pimpwell, and, having 'pisseth upon him', escapes from the prison using a conveniently placed rope.

With dexterity, Jordan weaves more and more strands of a complicated plot, keeping the pace up with a mixture of song and dance and humour, but also throwing in unexpected reminders of earlier pre-Civil War comedies. For example, he draws on Middleton's *Michaelmas Term* in his development of the feigned death and funeral of Mercurio which brings Nice to repentance as he

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Lodgings, sells Cherry-brandy, and is a Bawd.' Thomas Shadwell, *The Squire of Alsatia*, *Dramatis Personae*, in *The Complete Works of Thomas Shadwell* ed.by Montague Summers (London: Fortune Press, 1927), IV, p. 207.

<sup>269</sup> John Gay, *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), 1.1, in *The Beggar's Opera and other Eighteenth-Century Plays*, introd. David W.Lindsay (London: Everyman & J.M.Dent, 1993), p. 149.

watches his daughter mourning her lover. When news is brought that the debt has been cleared, the ‘corpse’ makes a miraculous recovery.<sup>270</sup>

A less successful device which Jordan uses to tie up the loose plot strands in his play consists of revealing that half the characters are related to each other, and here Jordan’s writing anticipates the unlikely *denouements* of the later eighteenth-century sentimental comedies.<sup>271</sup> The reason why Rivers does not eventually consummate his flirtation with Mrs Trimwell – ‘What pitty ‘tis to take new blanch Lawn/ And sprinkle ink on’t[...].’ (5.1.sig.G4r) – is revealed to be, not the obvious moral rejection of adultery – which would be unlikely in this comedy – but the more complicated reason that he is in fact her long lost brother from Paris. His friend Jack Wildfire, who has been a spectator of all these intrigues, reveals that he is Bellaflora’s cousin Worthlove, also returned from France. The apparent Frenchman, Sir Reverence, confesses that he is Nice’s long lost son, Splendora’s brother, who has been masquerading as her disastrous suitor in order to make Nice see the virtues of Mercurio as a son in law. With Splendora and Bellaflora united with their lovers, and the families reunited after their exile in France, Jordan (in the surviving post-regicide copy of the play) proclaims the mood of the Restoration through Wildfire’s exhortation to his friends, ‘Welcome to liberty my Cavaliers’ (5.1.sig.G2 v).

The publication of *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon* in 1657 is significant in that a comedy was being published at all in this period of official theatrical suppression. Cowley and Tatham were also active, as we have seen, and

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<sup>270</sup> Quomodo feigns death in order to test the loyalty of his son and heir; he is disappointed by Sim’s behaviour at his ‘funeral’ and so returns to life.

<sup>271</sup> Such as *The Brothers* (1769) by Richard Cumberland, and *The West Indian* (1771) by David Garrick.

there is a sense in which the key dramatists were gearing up to produce work during Cromwell's reign as much as they were preparing to welcome Charles II back to his theatrical home. However, whereas Killigrew looks back to the traditional comic forms of Middleton and Brome, and Cowley writes alongside Davenant, Jordan emerges as the true innovator and writer of a comic tradition which looks ahead to the Restoration comedies of Etherege, Wycherley and Shadwell – and still further ahead to the jailhouse comedy of John Gay.<sup>272</sup> As a cross-over writer, the former actor Jordan fulfils all the potential of this description. His plays were written and performed before the Restoration, revised during the Interregnum, and re-performed afterwards. Whereas Killigrew's inventions jump forward erratically to the twentieth century, Jordan provides a smoother transition from the mid seventeenth- to the mid eighteenth-century.

### **The Roundheads**

The final comedy I discuss in this thesis demonstrates how the mechanics of “cross-over” continued to function after the 1660s, mixing cautious experimentation with a sense of retrospection, and of bringing to fruition the seeds

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<sup>272</sup> Richard Brome's use of the beggars' songs in *A Jovial Crew* also anticipates Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*:

From hunger and cold who lives more free,  
Or who more richly clad than wee  
Our bellies are full; our flesh is warm;  
And, against pride, our rags are a charm.  
Enough is our Feast, and for tomorrow  
Let rich men care: we feel no sorrow.

Richard Brome, *A Jovial Crew*, in *A Jovial Crew: Richard Brome Online*, eds. Eleanor Lowe, Helen Ostovich and Richard Cave, (2010), 1.1.400-405.

<<http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/brome/frame.html>> [accessed 27 July 2012],

The songs in this play were so popular that later versions were added to them, and they were also printed separately as street ballads during the 1670s.

of novelty planted twenty years earlier by Tatham and Wilson. This play is unusual in “crossing over” a generation under the same king. Playing the ‘Old Game ore again’, Aphra Behn reworks and develops John Tatham’s text of *The Rump* into an equally successful comedy, *The Roundheads*.<sup>273</sup> The play’s themes were intended to resonate with new audiences, but there were, important differences between the two versions - as Derek Hughes describes:

*The Rump* is a sometimes funny and energetic topical skit, responding to events as they happened, and telling a story that had not yet ended. Behn, by contrast, is treating 1659-60 as a foreshadowing of events twenty years later, and as a key to them. (Hughes, p. 139)

Behn’s play was written in response to the 1678 Exclusion Crisis, supporting the monarchy and acknowledging the loose sexual morality of later seventeenth-century English society.<sup>274</sup> The circumstances of her play’s composition meant that she could not overtly criticise the monarchy, and did not have the freedom to be as openly satirical or as topical as Tatham and Wilson before her. Behn’s “cross-over” comedy is an endorsement of Restoration

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<sup>273</sup> *Lady Desborough*: Prosperous at first, in ills you grow so vain,  
You thought to Play the *Old Game* ore again.

Aphra Behn, *The Roundheads*, in *The Works of Aphra Behn: Electronic edition*, ed. by Janet Todd, (Charlottesville, Va.: InteLex Corporation, 2004), Epilogue, p. 424, 17-18. [Accessed 21 February 2012]. Further references to this edition will follow quotations in the text.

<sup>274</sup> The anti-Catholic rumblings began against Charles II’s queen, Catherine of Braganza, falsely accused by Titus Oates in 1678 of conspiring with Catholic supporters to assassinate the King and replace him with his Catholic brother James, Duke of York. Although discredited, Oates’s claims of a “Popish Plot” were built upon by Whig politicians to fuel an attempt to exclude James from the line of succession, replacing him with Charles II’s eldest illegitimate son, James the Duke of Monmouth. The conspiracy to replace James with Monmouth was led by the Earl of Shaftesbury, and considered by John Dryden in *Absalom and Achitophel* (1682). Dryden depicts the King as the sensual libertine King David, with Monmouth as Absalom, and Shaftesbury as the republican Achitophel, weary of David’s weak governance.

libertinism, but her need to support Charles II stifles any opportunity for creative development of Restoration comedy in the later seventeenth century. Importantly, she illustrates the way in which post-Restoration dramatists continued to look back to the Civil War and Protectorate years for their inspiration, driving home lessons learned in recent history. The ‘problem’ of this constant evocation of things past, however, was that the possibility of developing more experimental writing is hindered. Behn experiments as far as she can within the blueprint of the Restoration comedy of manners, ultimately producing a comedy which supports her monarch while critiquing the loose morality which contemporaries feared was placing the monarchy in a position as precarious as the 1640s.

In Hughes’s view, *The Roundheads*, like other plays of the early 1680s, portrays “the Tory victory as a re-enactment of the King’s restoration in 1660. In reviving the Restoration theme, dramatists appropriated and updated celebratory plays contemporary with the original event, regressing to the earliest evolutionary stages of Restoration drama.” (Hughes, p. 139) On one level, *The Roundheads* is indeed an updating of a Restoration comedy, retaining a large part of Tatham’s plot, characters and dialogue while jettisoning other material in favour of a subplot more typical of post-Restoration comedy. Behn takes more liberties with the historical facts than Tatham, conveniently killing off one character, Lord Desborough, in order that his wife can be reunited with her fictional lover, Freeman. (In fact the historical Desborough survived in prison for some years after the Restoration.) On another level, however, Behn introduces new material, using the battles of the lovers, the cavaliers Loveless and Freeman, and their

(apparently parliamentary) ladies, Lambert and Desborough, to re-enact a civil war between monarchists and republicans, and between Tories and Whigs.

A civil war is also waged between the sexes in Behn's play. As Susan J. Owen suggests, *The Roundheads* 'seems conventionally Tory in its sexual politics, offering the familiar association of royalism with virtue, and rebellion with women out of place.'<sup>275</sup> Behn uses language stereotypically used by dramatists to describe Catholics and Puritans in order to communicate themes of loyalty, treachery, love and hate. The Puritan males describe the Cavaliers as sinners all the more monstrous and terrifying because they are uncontrollable and unmanageable. Their husbands may find the Cavaliers monstrous and disgusting, but the Puritan women adore them:

*Lady Lambert:* How prettily those Cavalier things charm; I wonder how the Powers above came to give them all the Wit, Softness, and Gallantry; - -while all the great ones of our Age have the most slovenly, ungrateful, dull Behaviours; no Ayr, no Wit, no Love, or any thing to please a Lady with. *Gillyflower:* Truly Madam, there's a great Difference in the Men; yet Heav'n at first did it's part, but the Devil has since so over-done his, that what with the Vizard of Sanctity, which is the gadly Sneere, the drawing of the Face to a prodigious length, the formal language, with a certain Twang through the Nose, and the pious Goggle, they are fitter to scare Children than beget love in Ladies.

[...]

*Lady Lambert:* As thou say'st, these Heroicks have the strangest Power –  
*Lady Desborough:* But their Eyes Madam.

*Lady Lambert:* Ay, their Eyes *Desborough*; I wonder our Lords shou'd take away their Swords, and let'em wear their Eyes.

(2.2.107-115, 288-296)

Borrowing Tatham's pun on the 'peeping eye' of the penis, Behn's sexual wordplay on the removal of swords/eyes/penises might have turned the cavaliers into eunuchs, but in fact creates an image of the harem where they may continue

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<sup>275</sup> Susan J Owen, 'Behn's dramatic response to Restoration politics' in *The Cambridge Companion to Aphra Behn*, ed Derek Hughes and Janet Todd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 68 – 82 (p. 68).



to please the ladies. The harem is an exotic environment of secrets; unlikely though it is that the cavaliers may lose sexual domination, they would still be able to enjoy a unique and special relationship with the Puritan women. In Behn's play the Puritan husbands remain excluded from this secret, intimate, space.

Behn begins her play with an ironic reminder to her 1680s audience of the failure of the republic just over twenty years before. The prologue is spoken by the ghost of the Roundhead committee-man, Hewson, demoted at the end of *The Rump* to his former trade as a cobbler. Hewson's manifesto for the successful restoration of a republic involves buying loyalties and paying for deceitful propagandists:

Pay those that Rail, and those that can delude  
 With scribbling Nonsense the Loose Multitude.  
 Pay well your Witnesses, they may not run  
 To the right side and tell who set'em on  
 Pay'em so well, that they may ne'er  
 Recant and so turn Honest meerly out of want. (*Prologue*, 17 – 22)

The point is driven home by the frequent repetition of 'Pay'. According to this play, love of money is at the root of the Puritan parliaments, and Behn echoes the Royalist anger against the sequestration committees previously expressed by authors such as Cowley and Howard. Like Howard's cavalier colonels Blunt and Careless, Loveless is dispossessed of his estate and also – as his name implies – he is without love. Freeman is also dispossessed of his estate but takes his loss more pragmatically, partly because he suspects it may be regainable through his mistress Lady Desborough. Echoing the authors of the 1650s, Behn establishes the uncertainty of the times; deprived of their estates and status, characters struggle with their own and others' identity. Names and titles assume great importance when they are taken away, but lose significance when handed out

indiscriminately. Loveless responds bitterly to Lady Lambert's question, 'What art thou?':

*Loveless: A Gentleman -*  
 That cou'd have boasted Birth and Fortune too,  
 Till these accurs'd Times, which Heav'n confound,  
 Racing out all Nobility, all Vertue,  
 Has render'd me the rubbish of the World;  
 Whilst new rais'd Rascals, Canters, Robbers, Rebels  
 Do Lord it o're the Free-born, Brave and Noble. (2.1.55 – 61)

Behn encourages pro-Royalist sympathy from the audience by way of Lady Lambert's insensitive response:

*Lady Lambert:* I suppose you have lost your Estate, or some such trivial thing, which makes you angry [...]  
*Loveless:* Yes, a trivial Estate of some five and twenty hundred pound a year[...]  
*Lady Lambert:* I thought 'twas some such Grievance – but you must keep a good Tongue in your head, lest you be hang'd for *Scandalum Magnatum* –there's Law for ye, Sir.  
*Loveless:* No matter; then I shall be free from a damn'd Commonwealth, as you are pleas'd to call it, when indeed 'tis but a mongrel, mangy, Mock-Monarchy. (2.1.63 – 65 and 68 – 72)

Behn's Royalist sympathies go further than merely looking to evoke sympathy for the dispossessed cavaliers; she implies that the Parliamentarians' cause was essentially built on a false premise, and extends this suggestion to become a critique of the Whigs. So, in a committee meeting scene (a nod to Howard's earlier comedy), the pragmatic Roundhead Duckworth Duckingfield attacks the hypocrisy of honouring Cromwell as Lord Protector: 'Have we with such Industry, been pulling down Kings of the Royal Family, to set up Tyrants of our own, of mean and obscure Birth? No, if we're for a single Person, I'm for a lawful one.' (3.1.16 – 20)

Behn's adaptation of Tatham's text is an endorsement of Charles II's monarchy, once again in a precarious state. By attacking the Whig rebels, she signals support of the monarchy despite its flaws. As Michael Cordner points out, 'the tacit admission was that the restored monarchy had, to date, proved inadequate to resisting its enemies' scheming.' (Cordner, p.48) In reworking a play which depicts the chaotic failure of the Republic after Cromwell's death, Behn reminds her audience of the destabilising and confusing effects of a society without a leader, specifically recalling historical events in the living memory of some of those who saw *The Roundheads*. The epilogue, spoken by the secret cavalier Lady Desborough, attacking the Puritan/Whig antimonarchists, is a summary of the argument presented throughout the play:

Prosperous at first, in ills you grow so vain,  
 You thought to Play the *Old Game* ore again,  
 [...]And now you hop'd to make a new invasion,  
 And when you can't prevaile by open force,  
 To cunning tickling tricks you have recourse,  
 And raise Sedition forth without remorse. (*Epilogue*, 17, 18, 21 – 24)

The original "Old Game" is played against the monarchy, as well as Catholicism; the republic established at the end of the British Civil War was Puritan in character. Through Desborough, Behn reminds the largely Royalist audience of the grievances suffered by the cavaliers during the war years when their estates were taken over by parliamentarian and Puritan landlords:

Yet then they rail'd against the *Good Old Cause*,  
 Rail'd foolishly for Loyalty and Laws;  
 But when the Saints had put them to a stand,  
 We left them Loyalty and took their Land:  
 Yes, and the Pious work of Reformation  
 Rewarded was with Plunder, Sequestration (*Epilogue*, 35-40)

The final line contains a note of menace and strikes a deal with more prudish (implicitly Whiggish) audience members: ‘We will reform, when *you* are true to th’King.’ (*Ibid*, 48, my emphasis).

Behn’s “cross-over” comedy is specifically based upon Tatham’s text, but echoes other authors of the 1650s and early 1660s in her recollection of the immediate past. Like Cowley in *Cutter of Coleman Street*, she targets the Fifth Monarchists, reminding the audience of the dangers of the more extreme sects, implicitly linking their fanaticism with the Puritans/Whigs:

*Joyner*: What think you then of *Vane*?

*2<sup>nd</sup> Souldier*: As of a Fool, that has dreamt of a new Religion, and only fit to reign in that Fifth Monarchy he preaches so much up; but no King in this Age. *Feltman*: What of *Haslerig*?

*2<sup>nd</sup> Souldier*: A Hangman for *Haslerig*, I cry. (1.1.52 – 57)

The character of the hypocritical and lascivious lay elder, Ananias, recalls Wilson’s Scruple in his advances on one of his ‘flock’, but Behn makes the point more bluntly because this time his advances are received with extreme reluctance:

*Ananias*: Ah! hide those tempting Breasts, – Alack, how smooth and warm they are – [Feeling ‘em and sneering

[...]

*Lady Desborough*: I’m glad you have prov’d your self what I ever thought of all your pack of Knaves.

*Ananias*: Ah, Madam! Do not ruine my Reputation; there are Ladies of high Degree in the Commonwealth, to whom we find our selves most comforting; why might not you be one? – for, alas, we are accounted as able men in Ladies Chambers, as in our Pulpits; we serve both Functions. (3.2.322 – 323, 336 – 342)

The Puritans are accused of ridiculing the king’s divine authority ‘with Burlesque Marginal Notes’, and of greedily destroying church furnishings to adorn their own houses. The temples of God are ransacked, while the Puritans – who pretend to yearn after simplicity, honesty and truth – dress up their own houses as temples. Behn makes a particularly effective attack against the

Protectorate in the ladies' committee scene, where both Oliver Cromwell and his son Richard are referred to as though they were legitimate monarchs. In this case, the title of king and the family name of the Cromwells are not used, but the criticism is nevertheless clear:

*Lady Lambert:* Who made your Husband a Knight, Woman?

*Loveless:* Oliver the first, an't please ye.

*Lady Lambert:* Of horrid Memory; write that down – who yours?

*2nd Lady:* Richard the Fourth, an't like your Honour.

*Gillyflower:* Of sottish Memory; Shall I write that down too?

*Lady Desborough:* Most remarkably.

*[Lady] Cromwell:* *[Aside]* Heavens! Can I hear this Profanation of our Royal Family? (5.3.52 – 57)

Lady Cromwell's description of her husband and son as "our Royal Family" is not surprising, given contemporary suspicions of the Cromwells' ambiguous view of the crown. Behn's use of "Profanation" to describe criticism assumes an automatic connection between royalty and divinity, endorsing the Stuart monarchy's absolutist claim to be divinely anointed by God. The scene is given another twist, by Behn's introduction of Loveless disguised as a woman; the male cavalier penetrates the female parliamentary conclave, although he can only infiltrate their secret gatherings through the pretence of cross-dressing. Behn implicitly undermines their arguments in this scene as based essentially upon a false assumption that they are speaking to another woman. Their failure to discover Loveless's deception suggests their lack of sense or judgement.

Much of Behn's attack on the Puritan / Whig characters in *The Roundheads* relies upon the argument that they are mistaken in their assumptions and understanding, and also upon overturning the audience's possible assumptions. Tatham shows Fleetwood and Lambert as serious plotters and

“crafty Men”, but Behn uncompromisingly labels Fleetwood as a foppish idiot and Lambert as hen-pecked. Whereas *The Rump* gains its tensions from the depiction of the power-struggle between these two protagonists, in *The Roundheads* their struggle is already shown to be meaningless.

Fleetwood’s language and imagery are those of a Restoration fop; his over-seriousness about his role, his airy remarks, and above all his affected accent – pronouncing ‘Lard’ for ‘Lord’ – characterise him as a lightweight politician, and by this implicit ridicule, Behn undermines his strivings for enlightenment from his Puritan God:

*Fleetwood:* ...the weight of three Kingdoms is a heavy Burden for so weak Parts as mine; therefore, I will, before I appear at Councel; go seek the Lard in this great Affair; and, if I receive a Revelation for it, I shall with all Humility espouse the Yoke, for the Good of his People and mine: and so Gad with us, the Commonwealth of England. (1.2.430 – 433)

Fleetwood’s pronunciation of “God” as “Gad” serves to suggest his upper class (or affected upper class) accent, lazy and drawling. Colley Cibber, in *Love’s Last Shift, or The Fool in Fashion* (1696) and Vanbrugh’s sequel and parody *The Relapse, or Virtue in Danger* (1696) established this as a speech mannerism for Lord Foppington, the foolish fop played by Cibber himself. Subsequently Richard Brinsley Sheridan continued this tradition in his own sequel to Cibber’s play, *A Trip to Scarborough* (1777).

In *The Rump* the soldiers deride Fleetwood and champion Lambert; like Tatham, Behn uses these contrasting allegiances to develop the theme of the city/republic versus the invading army. However, her comedy is very ‘Restoration’ in its foregrounding of sex as the main currency in male-female transactions; the soldiers and later the dispossessed cavaliers, Loveless and

Freeman, discuss the sexual hypocrisy of the Roundhead women. 'Make Love to 'em, they answer you in Scripture,' ( 1.1.120-121) says Loveless, overlooking the fact that he is attempting to commit the sin of adultery with one of the wives.

Freeman is already having an affair with another parliamentary wife, Lady Desborough, but Behn provides the justification that she is his former sweetheart, promised to him before her marriage to Desborough. Anita Pacheco reads this as 'a royalist wish-fulfilment fantasy... all the women of the realm are loyal to the king and to the royalist cause, even those who are married to Whigs[...] forced marriage is the Tory dramatists' favourite explanation for this curious state of affairs; the women may look disloyal, but in fact have been loyal all along.'<sup>276</sup> Behn may not view the issue of adultery as particularly serious – her King was, after all, an openly serial adulterer – but this line functions implicitly as a broader critique of a society (as well as its sovereign) where those who support the King are morally questionable. This echoes the critique many dramatists expressed in the 1660s, but also effectively undermines Behn's defence of her monarch so she is forced to be circumspect in her criticism.

The Parliamentary men are hen-pecked, weak or hypocritical, and Behn shows the Parliamentary women to be mistaken in their judgements. Lady Lambert particularly misjudges the situation in her pursuit of Loveless in an embarrassing attempt to seduce him with what she believes to be the instruments of power, but which, for Loveless, are the quasi-divine memorials of the Martyr-King, Charles I. Derek Hughes reads this scene as indicative of Lady Lambert's inability to gain true majesty and power even when she dresses up in the

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<sup>276</sup> Anita Pacheco, 'Reading Toryism in Aphra Behn's *Cit-Cuckolding Comedies*', *The Review of English Studies*, New Series 55. 222 (2004), 690-708 (p. 690).

universally recognized symbols of monarchy.<sup>277</sup> In demonstrating Lady Lambert's impotency, Hughes seems to overlook the essential problem for Loveless and Lady Lambert: their failure to connect or understand each other in any way other than sexually. Behn shows that sexual desire is not enough when unaccompanied by an essential unity of spirit. For the audience, the scene moves swiftly from potential excitement to embarrassment as Lady Lambert attempts to seduce Loveless by wearing the regalia which she sees as evidence of power, and which he regards as markers of divinity.

The intended seduction scene begins well for Lady Lambert. Loveless enters her bedroom and she places a diamond bracelet around his arm, explaining: 'This the great Monarch of the World once ty'd about my Arm, and bade me wear it, till some greater man shou'd chance to win my Heart' (4.4.134-135). Lady Lambert's 'Monarch' is her erstwhile lover Cromwell. Exclaiming that 'Illustrious Oliver, / Was yet far short of thee,' (4.4.139-140) she '*rises, takes him by the hand, leads him to the Table*'. (4.4.146) On seeing the regalia, the startled Loveless exclaims:

*Loveless:* Hah – a Crown – and Sceptre!  
Have I been all this while  
So near the Sacred Reliques of my King!  
And found no Awful motion in my blood,  
Nothing that mov'd Sacred Devotion in me? (4.4.148-152)

Lady Lambert, failing to appreciate that her lover's sentiments are prompted by a mixture of awe and shame, coos over the material object, the crown: 'Is't it not a lovely thing?' (4.4.158) Loveless's horrified response is to

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<sup>277</sup> '[...]the collapse of natural authority has created a hypothetical space in which female power might expand, but which remains morally and psychologically out of her or any other woman's reach.' (Hughes, *Theatre of Aphra Behn*, p. 141.)



fall on his knees and worship the symbols of kingship, representing Charles I, the Martyr King:

*Loveless*: There's such Divinity i'th very Form on't, Had I been conscious  
I'd been near the Temple Where this bright Relique of the Glorious Martyr  
Had been inshrin'd, 'thad spoil'd my soft Devotion! - 'tis Sacrilege to dally  
where it is; A rude, a Sawcy Treason to approach it With an unbended  
knee; for Heavn's sake, Madam, Let us not be profane in our Delights.  
(4.4.159-166)

The Royal insignia are anthropomorphized into the dead body of Charles I, the Royal Martyr. This is not an unusual or shocking occurrence – immediately after Charles I's execution, at least two plays represented the King's dead body onstage, and he was shown as an icon in printed pictures.<sup>278</sup> Their worship by *Loveless* is however equivalent to the representation of a religious act on stage – and this may have been shocking to a seventeenth-century audience.

Lady Lambert, still uncomprehending, tries to put the crown on *Loveless*' head, but he immediately puts it back on the cushion: 'Forbear, and do not play with holy things, / Let us retire, and love as Mortals shou'd.' (4.4.175-176) Lady Lambert fears that her lover's obdurate refusal to allow her to wear the crown signifies that he will not appreciate her full value as a Queen:

*Lady Lambert*: What hopes have I of all your promis'd Constancy,  
Whilst this, which possibly 'ere long may adorn my Brow,  
And ought to raise me higher in your Love,  
Ought to transform you even to Adoration,

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<sup>278</sup> *The Famous Tragedy of Charles I* (1649) was an account of the King's death which ended with the curtain being drawn back to show the apparent body of Charles I lying in state as a chorus lamented his demise. It may have been staged by the Red Bull company at the Fortune Theatre. A second version of this drama, *Crafty Cromwell* (1649), actually shows the execution scene on stage – although it is not clear whether or not this was ever staged. The frontispiece of Thomas Killigrew's complete *Theatrical Works* shows the courtier and dramatist/theatre manager turning from a picture of Charles I on the wall above him to gaze out at the reader.

Shall poorly make you vanish from it's Lustre;  
 Methinks the very Fancy of a Queen  
 Is worth a thousand Mistress's of less Illustrious Rank. (4.4.179 – 186)  
 Loveless's response is short and succinct:

*Loveless:* What every Pageant Queen? You might from thence infer  
 I'd fall in Love with every little Actress, because  
 She acts the Queen for half an hour,  
 But then the gawdy Robe is laid aside. (4.4.187 – 189)

As Hughes demonstrates, the bathos of this image of the 'Pageant Queen' is extended to the crown itself. In this scene it starts off as divine, but in the next scene, when Lady Lambert and later Lambert sit on her potential lover, hidden under the bedclothes, the crown 'becomes a prop in a bedroom farce.' (Hughes, p. 142). The lovers are interrupted by the entrance of the drunken members of the Puritan Committee of Safety (who have just been enjoying a cushion dance), led by her unsuspecting cuckolded husband, Lambert. The Puritan males are shown to be incapable of the sober, sensible behaviour they express in public spaces. Behn makes the point that only the anointed Royal family, the Stuarts, can gain the true power of the crown and sceptre; by inference, imposters like the Cromwells and Monmouth can never be absolute monarchs.

Lambert and his associates penetrate the bedroom in which Lady Lambert claims to be saying her prayers. Such an action might be considered appropriate in the marital bedroom, but is turned into violation by the apparent use (or misuse) of this bedroom as a prayer room. But, as the audience already knows, Lady Lambert is deceiving her husband since her lover is concealed in the room. Her hypocritical protestations that she is praying are effectively undermined. It is notable that the quasi-religious pacts are made by the adulterous lovers, Lady Desborough and Freeman and Lady Lambert and Loveless. Behn not only

endorses the act of adultery but also gives it formal weight and seriousness, implicitly celebrating one of the sins condemned by the Ten Commandments. In effect she undermines the state religion which lives by those commandments – and, supports her adulterous monarch Charles II.

In her desire to promote this argument, Behn overlooks the problem of her mis-matched lovers. For Lady Lambert, this is true love – ‘I never lov’d before; *Old Oliver* I suffer’d for my interest’. (4.3.51) Her conversion to the Royalist cause is inspired by her love for Loveless:

*Lady Lambert:* Curse on the Lies and Cheats of Conventicles,  
That taught me first to think Heroicks Divels,  
Blood-thirsty, lewd, tyrannick Salvage Monsters.  
But I believe’em Angels all, if all like *Loveless*.  
What heavenly thing then must the Master be,  
Whose Servants are Divine? (4.3.381-386)

Lady Lambert appears sincere in her transformation. Hughes takes the view that ‘Behn complicates and finally redeems the character of Lady Lambert, ambitious for female command but finally reformed by love for the Cavalier Loveless.’ (Hughes, p. 140). Behn has the problem of uniting the disparate lovers, but manages to do this when Lady Lambert demonstrates to Loveless the extent of her reform and conversion. Facing imminent imprisonment with her husband and other committee members, she begs him to leave her:

*Lady Lambert:* Alas, I do not merit thy Respect,  
I’m fall’n to Scorn, to Pity and Contempt. [weeping  
Ah *Loveless*, fly the Wretched –  
Thy Vertue is too noble to be shin’d on  
By any thing but rising Suns alone:  
In a declining shade: -----  
*Loveless:* By Heav’n, you were never great till now!  
I never thought thee so much worth my Love, [kneels  
My Knee, and Adoration, till this Minute.  
-----I come to offer you my Life, and all  
The little Fortune the rude Herd has left me. (5.1.368-378)

To resolve her love plots, Behn plays with the gap between reality and fiction which, as I have shown, her sometime source, Thomas Killigrew also explored in his comedy *The Parson's Wedding*.<sup>279</sup> In Behn's play, the 'real' character Lady Lambert elopes with the fictional character Loveless As Cordner points out, given that Behn had killed off the real character of Lord Desborough, her refusal to do so in the Lamberts' case means that Lady Lambert, leaving her husband, 'moves onward into the new world of Stuart monarchy in the embrace of a man who is not her husband.' (Cordner, p.70) Although the real Lady Lambert was widely suspected of being Cromwell's mistress, Behn's unequivocal support of this rumour has the power to make fiction function as fact.

As a "cross-over" comedy, *The Roundheads* reworks a play successful just before the Restoration of Charles II in order to remind audiences in the 1680s of Charles's popularity in the 1660s and his return to the throne. As a piece of propaganda, it is successful, but as a reworking of the 'old' comedies of John Tatham and John Wilson, it is less impressive. Behn does not take the opportunity to develop their satirical lead, but instead hides behind a defence of Restoration libertine society. Always transient and transformative by nature, the phenomenon of the "cross-over" comedy ends its cycle at this point.

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<sup>279</sup> The main source for Behn's comedy *The Rover or the Banished Cavaliers* (Part I, 1677) was Killigrew's closet drama, claiming to be an account of his exile abroad, *Thomaso* (1664). *Thomaso* was attacked by Richard Flecknoe in 1667 in his satire *The Life of Tomaso the Wanderer, an epitome*, which challenged Killigrew's romantic self-portrait of a successful cavalier adventurer by depicting him instead as a petty thief and trickster.

### **Conclusion: The significance of the ‘cross over’ comedies**

This thesis has argued that the plays which were restaged in the 1660s were carefully chosen, and that they represented an essential part of the restoration of the English monarchy under Charles II. The King and his theatre managers, Killigrew and Davenant, consciously signalled the restoration of pre-war prosperity in pleasing contrast to the austerity imposed on the British people by the war and short-lived Republic. The choice of certain plays, and the omission of others, were both significant. But this was not because the British public were anxious to spare Charles II the pain of memorialising his father’s execution, nor because they longed to express a collective apology. Rather, the performance of the cross-over plays helped to promote the restored monarchy; re-staging the regicide in order that it should be universally condemned, and ridiculing the parliamentarians and the republic in the revived playhouses .

Charles II’s theatre owed much to French influences, but the comedies staged in the early years of the Restoration were not simply imitations. By restaging certain English comedies, Davenant and Killigrew were reminding audiences of what had previously been popular in Charles I’s reign. In so doing, they provided a link with the past, but also offered material for reinterpretation in the post-war, post-republic period. Audiences in the 1660s were not the audiences of the 1640s; many were new to playgoing, having never visited a public performance. Of those who were former theatregoers, some were not courtiers and so had not seen the plays previously staged as private theatricals. When “cross-over” comedies were staged in the public playhouses in the presence of king, this represented a strikingly new development in the relationship between the monarch

and people. Charles II renegotiated the role of the monarchy and redefined its relationship to the people. The cross-over comedies played an important part in that renegotiation and redefinition.

On the simplest level, the “cross-over” comedies satisfied a collective desire to revisit hits which were popular before the closure of the playhouses. But these particular plays were chosen because their themes tapped into shared experiences: the responsibilities of landlords and tenants, the fear of poverty, the strong relationship between Wit and survival, the question of inheritance, and the possibility of a utopian republic. All of these had been concerns in Charles I’s day; now the discussions were reopened in his son’s. Revisiting the concerns of Charles I’s reign enabled Charles II to remind his subjects that he had been a former fugitive and exile who had lost his own inheritance and possessions, and was therefore uniquely able to sympathise with his subjects. The restaging of comedies dealing with social injustice was an apology to his people, and a promise that the same thing would not happen again. Charles II harked back to the sumptuousness of Elizabeth I’s court, but also invested the monarchy with a new sense of approachability and accessibility, showing that he had learned lessons from the regicide.

I began my thesis by defining the “cross-over” from the court of Charles I to the court of Charles II, via the court of Oliver Cromwell, comparing the cultural, social and theatrical climates of the 1640s and the 1660s. I showed how the restaging of the “cross-over” comedies changed their original meaning and impact. After setting the thesis in the context of the “cross-over” from the Caroline to the Restoration courts, from the reserved and autocratic Charles I to

his approachable and gregarious son Charles II, and from pre-war to post-war England, London in particular, I argued that *The Maid in the Mill* by the first “cross-over” writer, John Fletcher, began by criticising the monarchy but later came to function as praise. Using this first example of “cross-over” I defined some of the key effects; the reworking and rewriting of a text, and the restaging in the Restoration playhouses with all the “cross-over” from the Jacobean and Caroline playing spaces which naturally ensued.

In Chapter One I showed how concerns about property and ineffectual landowners, which formed part of the causes of the English Civil War, were considered by the city authors Thomas Middleton and Richard Brome. The war itself was subsequently described by the aristocratic author Sir Robert Howard who, like Davenant and Killigrew, had actually lived through the experience. In the post-war world, the idea of deprivation and reclamation of inheritance (which had sustained the royalist exiles) is countered by the argument that inheritance is often worthless. The old aristocracy was now confronted by the prosperous business class and with novel practices of money-making and merchandising. When property was confiscated or destroyed, it became newly important to survive by one’s wits, and I sign-posted this discussion which later formed the basis of Chapter Three.

When cross-over plays were recrafted and reperformed after a generation had passed and a war had taken place, their authors were writing for different audiences in a different world. Chapter Two showed how Abraham Cowley and Thomas Killigrew undermined the courtly love myth, privileging sexual desire over platonic love, in the contrasting courts of Charles II and his parents.

Cowley's alterations to *The Guardian*, for example, showed his awareness of the need to update and re-present material for a new audience, offering a more 'acceptable' version of the past. The cynical portraits of Cutter and Blade fit well into the new Restoration post-war society of Cowley's audience. Killigrew's *Parson's Wedding* provides a clue to the way in which English comic writing might have developed had there not been a civil war. Drawing on the Renaissance fascination with shape-changing and multiple identities, and exploring ways in which characters can step in and out of their plays, on one level Killigrew challenges and satirises the showy spectacular (and implicitly false, artificial) entertainments of his rival Davenant; on another level, by manipulating the relationship between [char]actor and audience, he questions the existence and definition of truth. The truth which Killigrew finds, through stripping away artifice, is where the "magick mirror" reflects the audience back on themselves. When material possessions are confiscated and props are discarded, words become the most powerful form of communication - but their effect is ephemeral and their power transient.

Chapter Three explored the ideas of literary inheritance which were developing in the Restoration. As I showed in my discussion of *The Law Against Lovers*, Davenant appropriated and 'improved' the plays of his godfather William Shakespeare, capitalising upon his own literary 'inheritance.' With John Dryden he developed the idea of an artistic inheritance passed on from Shakespeare, Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher – authors who were only a generation apart, admired by the Jacobean and Caroline intelligentsia. Both Davenant and Dryden argued the case for the transforming powers of Wit – Dryden seeing it as an



artistically enhancing tool, but Davenant as a semi-divine quality possessed by the best artists. However, Davenant also explored the idea of the personification of Wit, and the shorthand description of those who employ Wit comes to reflect their characters. In his “cross-over” comedy *The Wits* Davenant offers an illustration of the power of Wit as wielded by the clever members of society; they manage to survive by using their Wits, and proving themselves to have varying amounts of Wit. This positive depiction is offset by John Wilson’s more cynical view of Wit as a weapon of deceit in *The Cheats*. Both point towards the ‘new’ Restoration comedy, as a natural development of and successor to the “cross-over” plays.

If the restaging of “cross-over” comedies encouraged a revising of societal and historical assumptions, to what extent did they contribute to the development of the Restoration comedy of manners? Killigrew, Tatham and Wilson all explored ways of developing pre-Commonwealth plays in increasingly experimental and exciting ways; but, as I argued in Chapter Four, Thomas Jordan’s “cross-over” comedy *The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon* successfully established the “blueprint” for Restoration comedy. Jordan combined the traditions of the past with the ‘modern’ witty wordplay, rivalling Etherege and Wycherley in his sparkling dialogue and cleverly constructed plots, and looking forward to Gay’s popular eighteenth-century jail operas.

The comedies of Brome and Davenant warned against unfair treatment by an implicitly weak and potentially tyrannous regime. Other plays, such as John Tatham’s, described the implementation of that regime with a journalistic, satirical style. Tatham undermined the Protectorate so successfully that – as I discussed in Chapter Four – Aphra Behn used his comedy *The Rump* as the

inspiration for her Exclusion Crisis comedy *The Roundheads*. But the topicality which Tatham and Wilson developed in *The Rump* and *The Cheats* is not taken further in Behn's more cautiously satirical comedy.

The "cross-over" comedies reveal responses to a certain moment in English history, when "the World Turn'd Upside Down" was set to rights again, and history was rewritten by the Stuart kings. They reveal how Charles II's subjects responded to the events of the Civil War, his father's regicide, and the Commonwealth which briefly followed. But these plays were also crucial in shaping the development of comedy in the Restoration and beyond. My thesis has demonstrated that the "cross-over" phenomenon was a central chapter in the history of the early modern English stage, and has challenged the assumption that these plays were mere 'left-overs' in the libraries of Davenant and Killigrew, briefly staged in the lull before the new Restoration comedies hit the stage.

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